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HOW ROCKY JOHNSON BECAME
A MARTYR FOR AMERICA

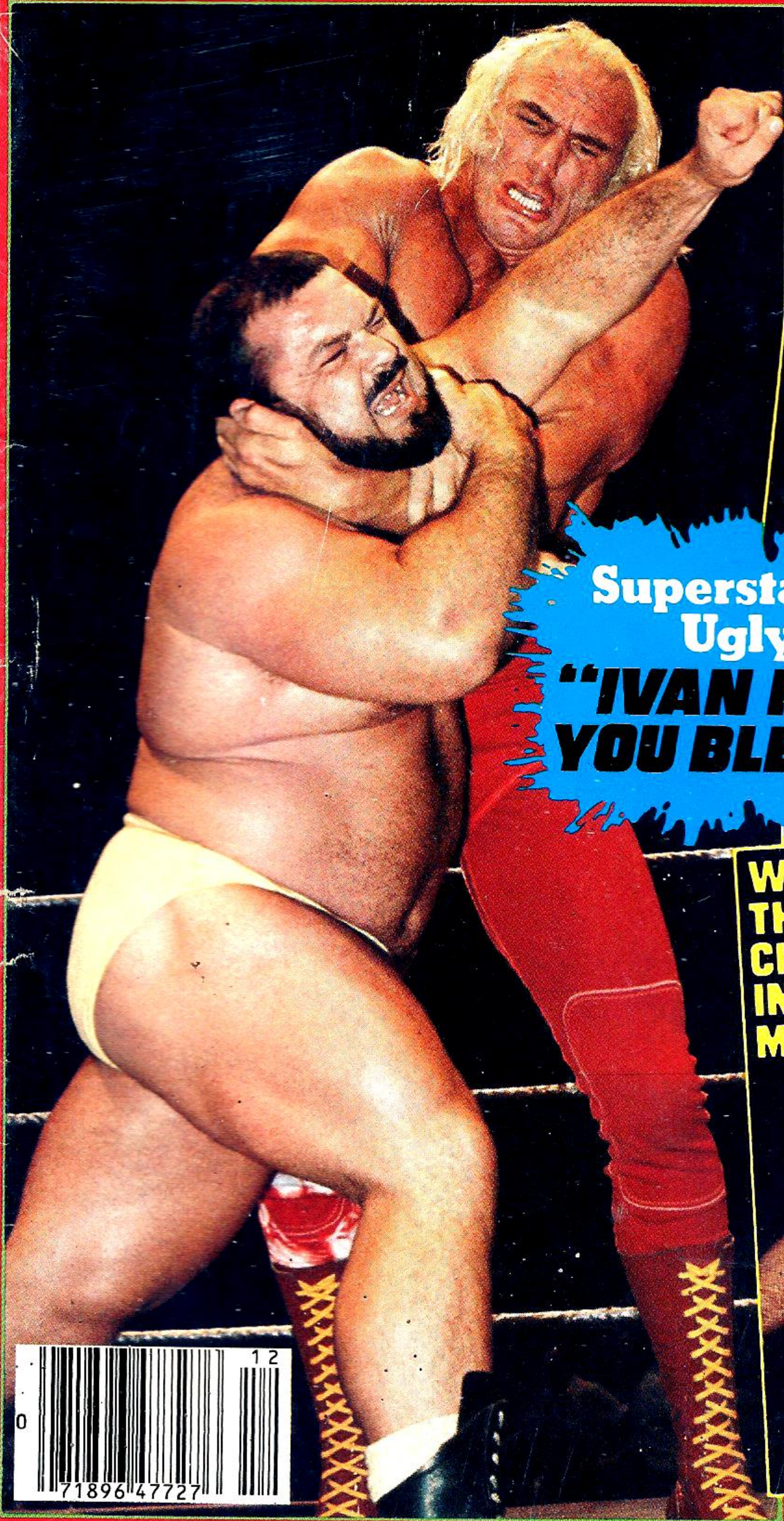
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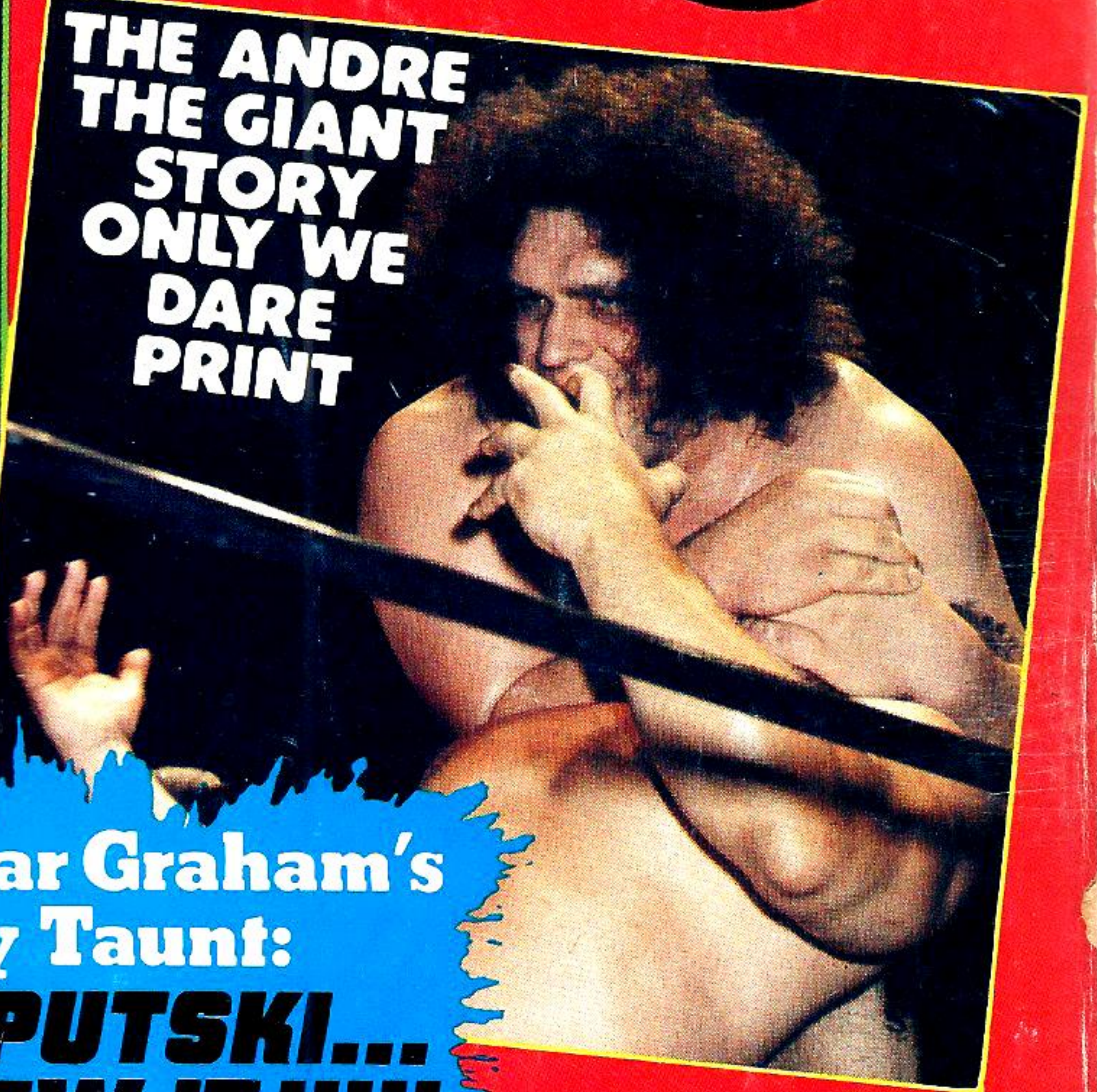


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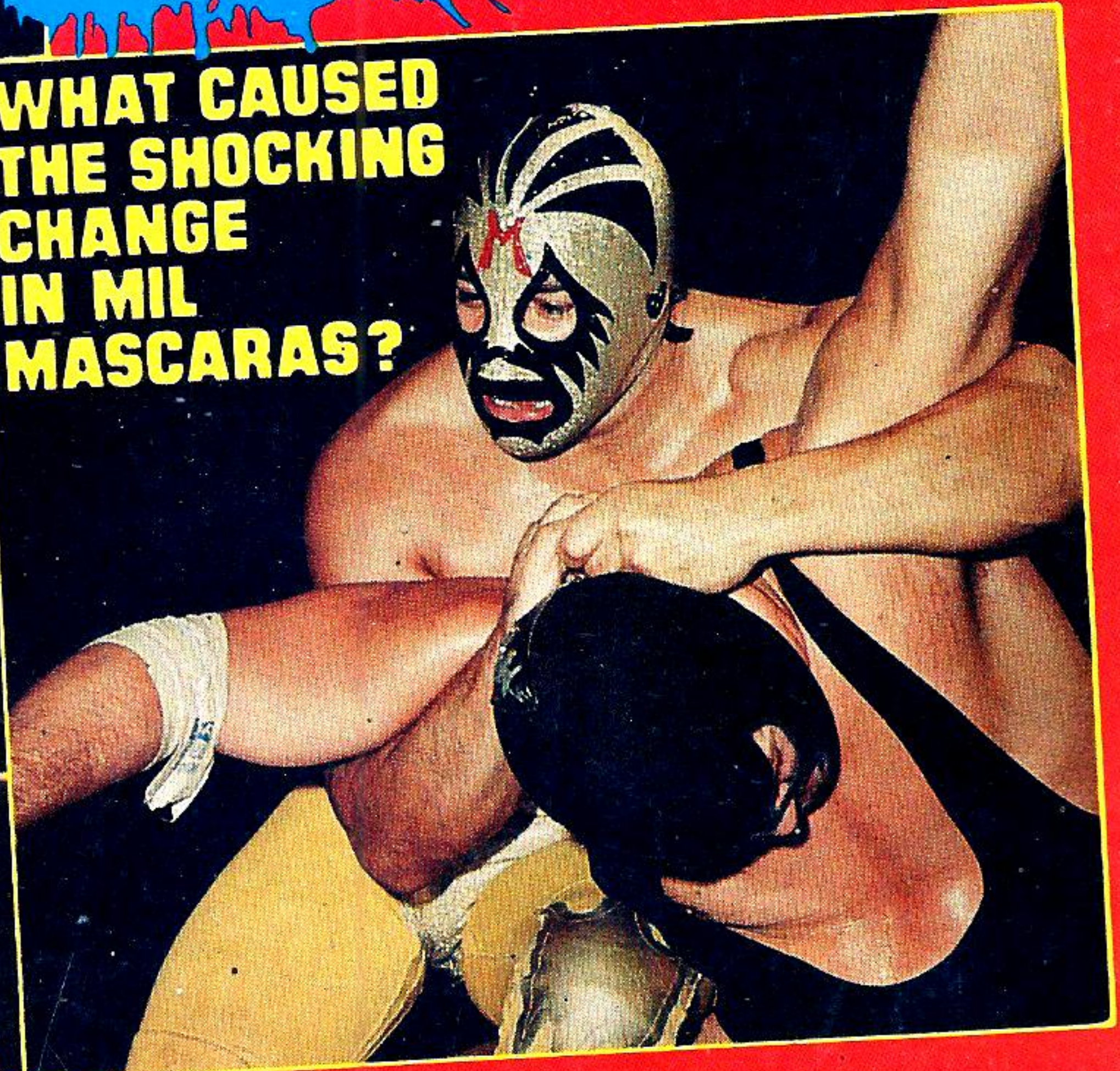


THE ANDRE
THE GIANT
STORY
ONLY WE
DARE
PRINT



Superstar Graham's
Ugly Taunt:
**"IVAN PUTSKI...
YOU BLEW IT!!!"**

WHAT CAUSED
THE SHOCKING
CHANGE
IN MIL
MASCARAS?



INSIDE *Wrestling*

THE MAGAZINE THAT RIPS
THE LID OFF PRO WRESTLING

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Peter
King

Editor-in-Chief

It was just a few weeks ago when Dusty Rhodes came "struttin' on down Broadway" here in New York to battle Superstar Graham for the WWF belt. And let me tell you, Big Dust was superb. He battered Graham from ringpost to ringpost. Only Graham's getting himself counted out prevented Dusty from winning the belt.

But enough about Dusty Rhodes the wrestler. Now let me tell you about Dusty Rhodes the man. Many hours after the bout, as the first rays of a crisp autumn day began to bathe the city in its golden warmth, Dusty and I were still walking the streets, talking. "Peter, although I didn't win the belt," he confessed, "I'm still happy. It's quite a thrill to be accepted as a hero in the world's biggest city." Dusty looked up at New York's magnificent skyline and smiled. For a "Cosmic Cowboy" from the rural South, he had made it big.

It was then that I realized what makes Dusty the man he is. Here is this man, from a poverty-stricken, humble--but very proud--beginnings, now a huge success. But as he eyed the New York skyline, I could tell his mind's eye was filled with visions of hand-me-downs and hunger pains. Then Dusty looked at me, and his blue eyes were as clear and as sharp as twin chips of sweetwater ice. "Don't never forget from where you came. I hope the good Lord don't never let me forget. 'Cause that's the spark that keeps me going. All these poor chillun in the world, with not enough food in their bellies, they look to me for hope. Peter, these chillun are my babies. I wrestle for them."

Dusty looked away from me and again stared intently at New York's imposing silhouette. I followed his gaze and we grew silent.

And I knew what he meant.

TOP SECRET

Behind the Dressing Room Door

by Randy
Gordon



THE GOLDEN TERROR is the villain I am after now. I had been away from the WWWF area for a while. During my absence, the Golden Terror, Lou Albano's newest lowlife protege, decided to strike.

Talent-wise, I'd have to say he is not much. But with the notorious Captain Albano behind him, I have a feeling he could be going places.

Recently, I had to make the Golden Terror well aware of my presence. Posing as a security guard, I was able to enter the Golden Terror's dressing room before a match. While he was in the bathroom, I smeared colorless, odorless commercial glue inside his mask. It was a special glue that dries instantly under warm conditions—such as the 98.6 degree heat of the human body.

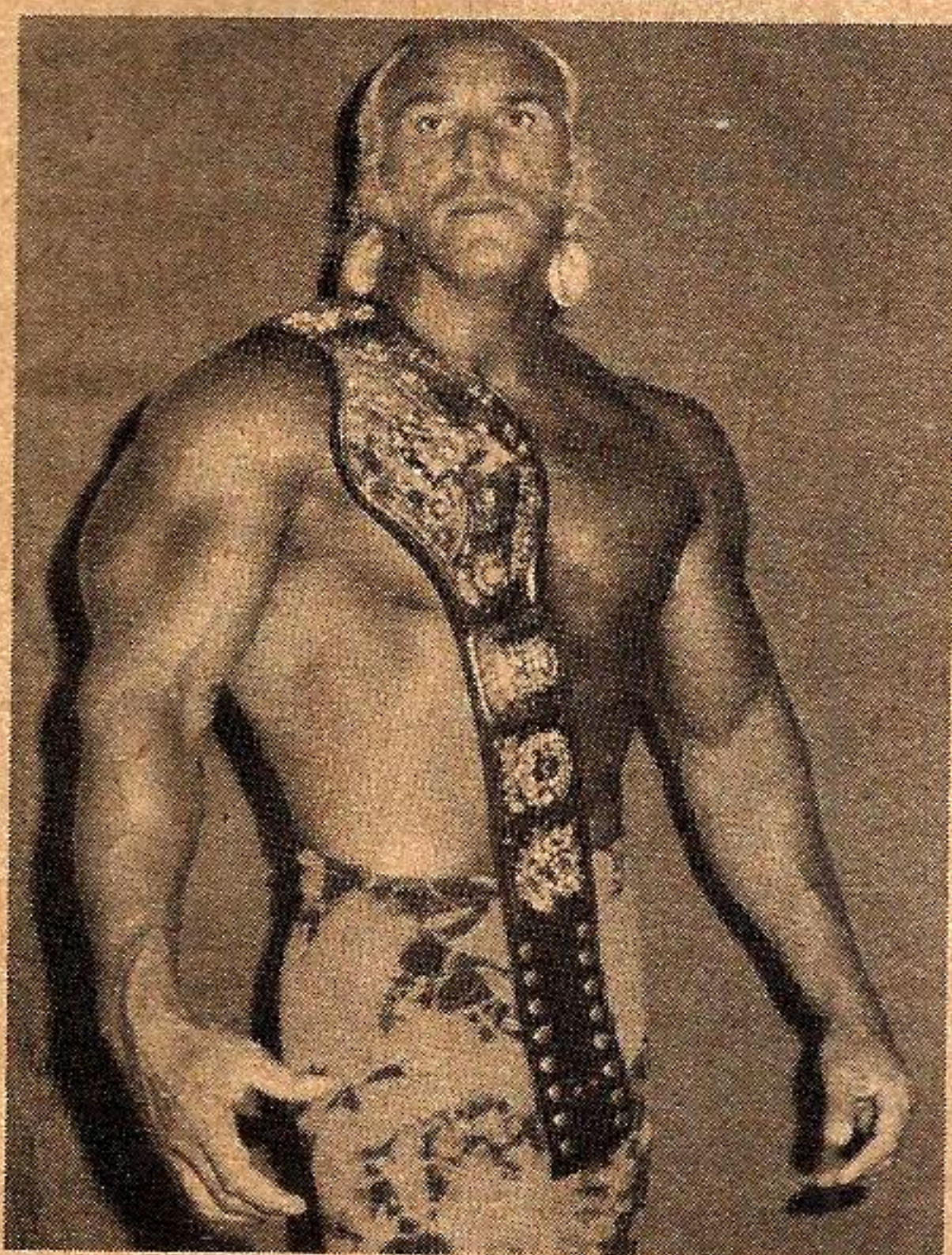
Because the glue was colorless and odorless, the Golden Terror had no idea what was happening when he put the mask on. Later, after he had finished breaking all of wrestling's rules on the way to pulverizing another opponent, he returned to his dressing room with Albano. Both were laughing quite hard. But it was I who had the last laugh. For when the Golden Terror went to remove his mask—surprise!—it wouldn't come off. I wrote on my business card, "Hello Glueface. It was wonderful meeting you. Hope we can do it again real soon. Your pal, Randy Gordon." Then I pushed it under his dressing room door and left. P.S.—I have no idea how he got the mask off!

In last month's **INSIDE WRESTLING**, you read a story by Andre the Giant entitled, "I challenge Mil Mascaras."

(Continued on page 44)

Body Slams & Pinfalls

By Dan Shocket



Superstar Billy Graham has agreed to place his title on the line in an effort to win the all-time championship.

FOR TOO MANY years, people have been begging the three top champions to wrestle each other to establish the sport's one true king. The pleas fell on deaf ears belonging to scientific wrestlers. Only when the rulebreakers dominate the sport is the fans' dream becoming a reality.

When babies like Jack Brisco, Verne Gagne, and Bruno Sammartino ruled the three associations, there wasn't even a hint of a tournament to establish the top man. That's because these three losers have no guts. Two other popular champions also fled any mention of a tournament; let's include Dory Funk Jr. and Pedro Morales in our rollcall of cowardice. The rulebreaking champions, up to

this year, had their titles stolen from them before they could consider organizing a tournament.

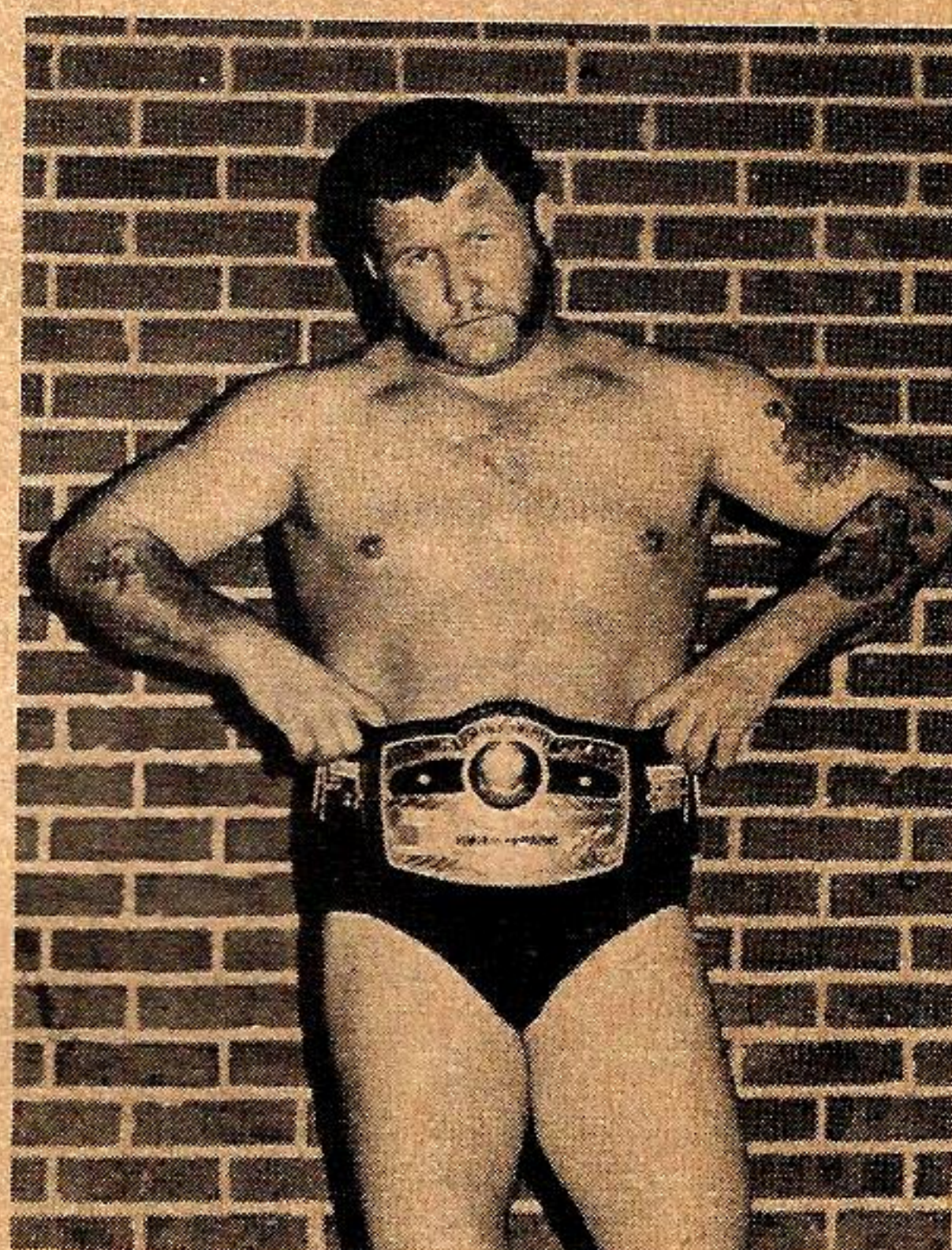
All the time wrestling fans were dreaming of one champion, the scientific rulers whimpered at the suggestion. While they were talking about "the dignity of the sport," they did everything in their power to make sure the dream was never realized. Why? No one had to explain to the hypocrite kings how much money they'd lose if they didn't win the tournament. And when it comes between greenbacks and dignity, scientific wrestlers go for the dough 10 out of 10 times. Even Bruno Sammartino is smart enough to know the bank won't take pride for mortgage payments.

So scientific wrestlers, lacking guts but having greed, ran away from the possibility of one champion. Before wrestling dignity could get more than lip service, the scientific champions had to be defeated. Wrestling history can be thankful that occurred.

Today, the three champions are willing to take a risk. They want the money, but not the small fortune one of three champions earns. These men have nerve, determination, and live for the challenge.

In other days, they'd be buccaneers or explorers. Today, their quest is for sole ownership of the wrestling championship.

The first step, the most difficult one, has been made. The first match has been arranged. WWWF champion Superstar Billy Graham will meet NWA champion Harley



Harley Race is ready to risk his title in order to prove he is the greatest of the three wrestling champions.

Race. These two knew what they wanted and got it. You didn't hear any nonsense from their mouths about, "I only do what the commissioners tell me." These are men, not the wimps of Brisco, Gagne or Sammartino caliber. Men know what they want, go out, and get it. Race and Graham are men.

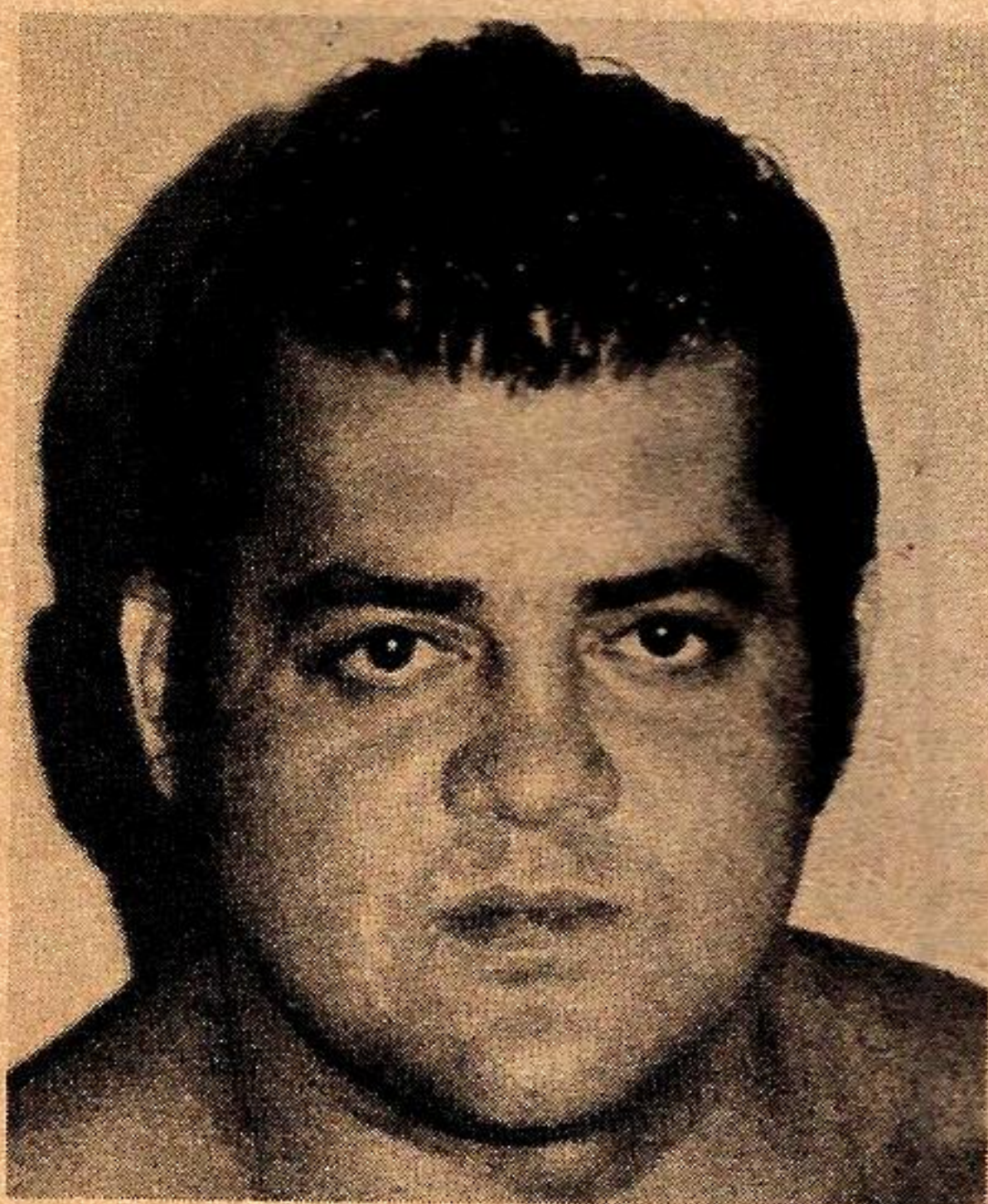
The winner of the match has every right to call himself a great champion. Nick Bockwinkle, managed by the great Bobby Heenan, will have to put his AWA title on the line to go after the winner. According to Heenan, "Nick can't wait to challenge the better man. He doesn't care if it's Graham or Race. He just wants the guy who comes out on top."

(Continued on page 46)

NAMES MAKING

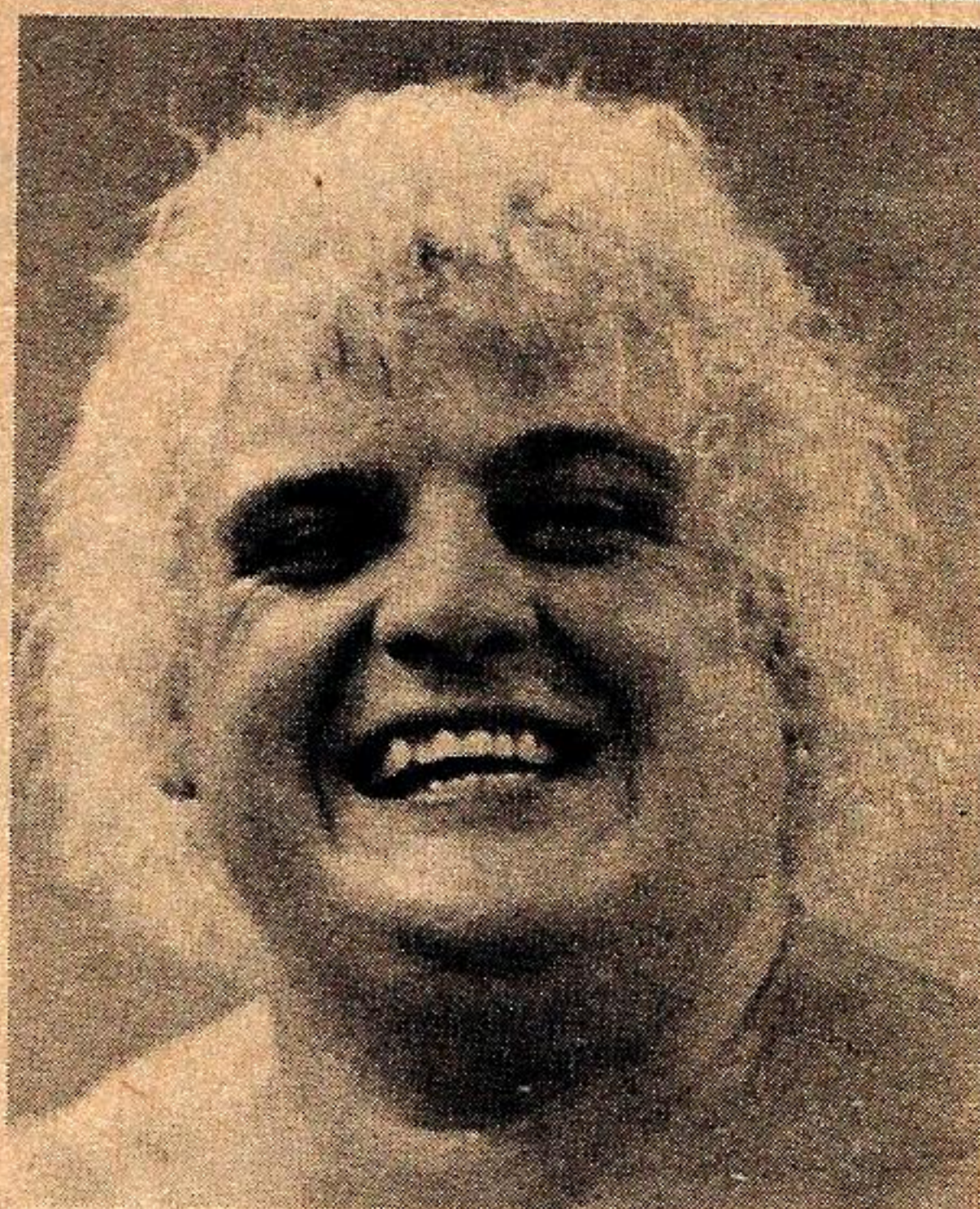
Congratulations are in order for the "American Dream", **DUSTY RHODES**. He has become the first wrestler in the history of our magazines to be rated number one in three different categories! Dusty is the top contender for both the WWF and NWA heavyweight titles. He is also at the top of the list of "Most Popular" in our ratings! You're something else, Dusty!

PAT PATTERSON claims he was the victim of an ugly trick by the Florida Wrestling Commission. Pat, who lost his television championship to sensational **PEDRO MORALES**, was originally scheduled to defend against **BOB ARMSTRONG**. Bob couldn't get to the arena in time, so the commission picked



PEDRO MORALES

Pedro as a substitute. "I specifically trained to wrestle Armstrong!" exclaims Patterson. "The title defense should have been canceled



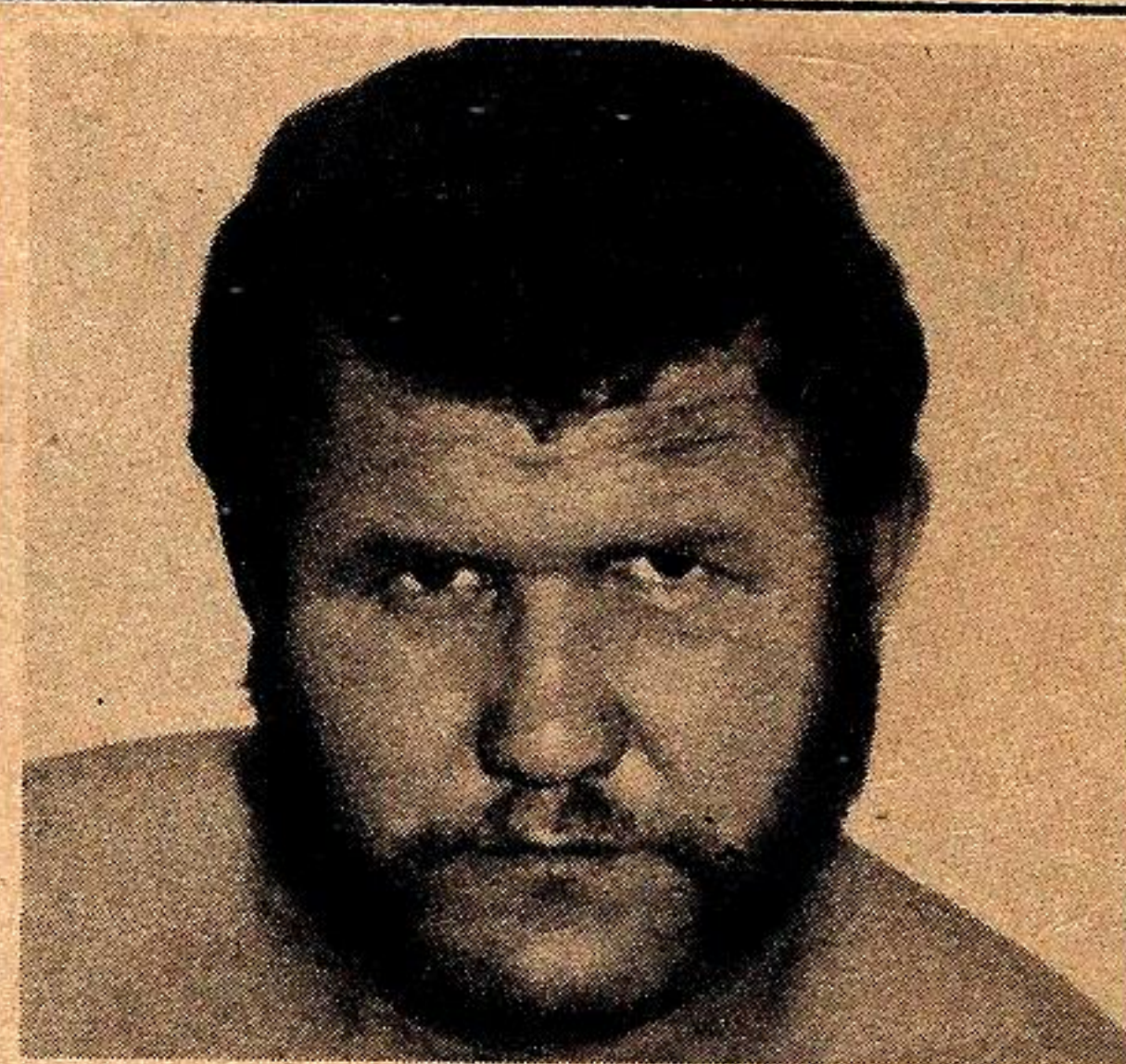
DUSTY RHODES

when he didn't show up. But the commission wanted me to lose the title. They forced me to wrestle that greaseball Morales, a man I did not train for!"

It appears **GRAND WIZARD**, manager of WWF champion **SUPERSTAR GRAHAM**, is considering a bid by Madison Square Garden wrestling promoters to let his champion finally square off against the



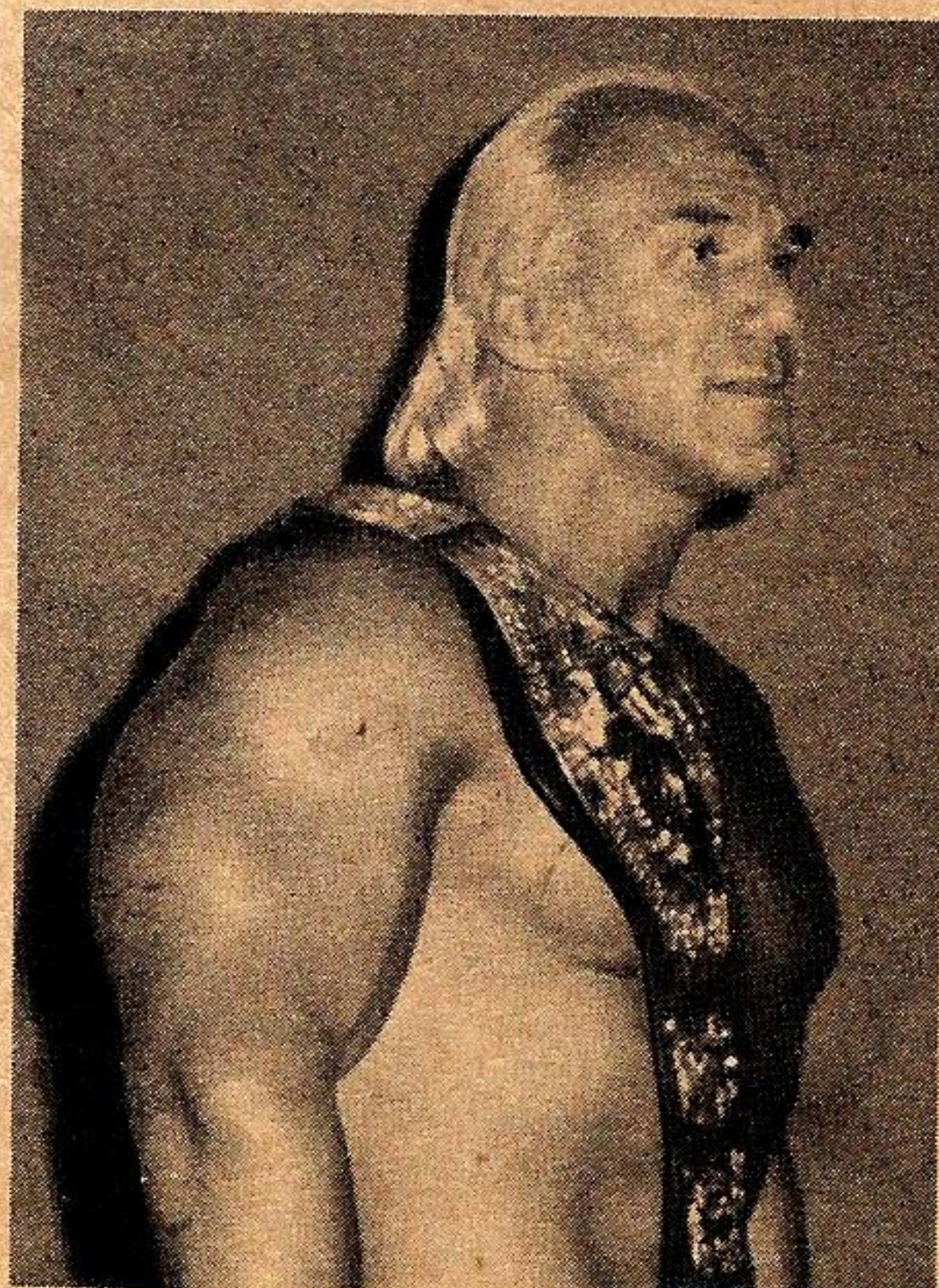
GRAND WIZARD



HARLEY RACE

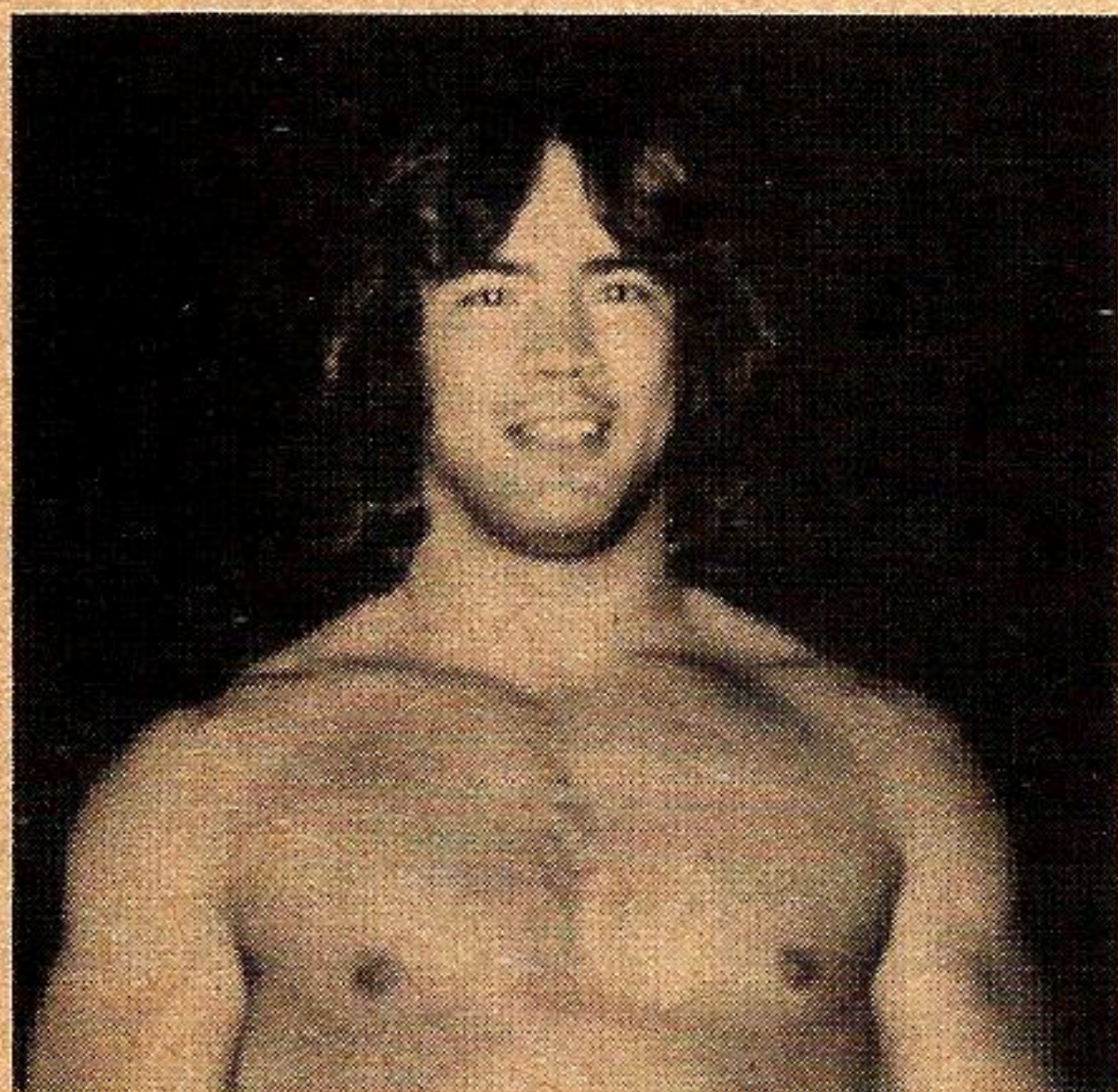
one and only **BOB BACKLUND** . . . Rapidly rising star **JERRY OATES** claims **HARLEY RACE** has put a bounty on his head to stop Jerry's bid for the NWA title . . . Rookie manager "General" **SKANDOR AKBAR** hopes to add **BOBBY DUNCUM** to his growing stable of wrestlers . . . Florida wrestlers are complaining to the NWA that the tactics used by **MR. SAITO** is illeal in this country.

Reports from the Northwest indicate **JESSE VENTURA** has



SUPERSTAR GRAHAM

dropped his rulebreaking ways to become a fan favorite . . . LARS ANDERSON is wrestling again after a short self-imposed retirement. Fans in Florida cringe seeing how brutal Lars can be when he tears favorite wrestlers apart with ease . . . DEAN HO promises west coast



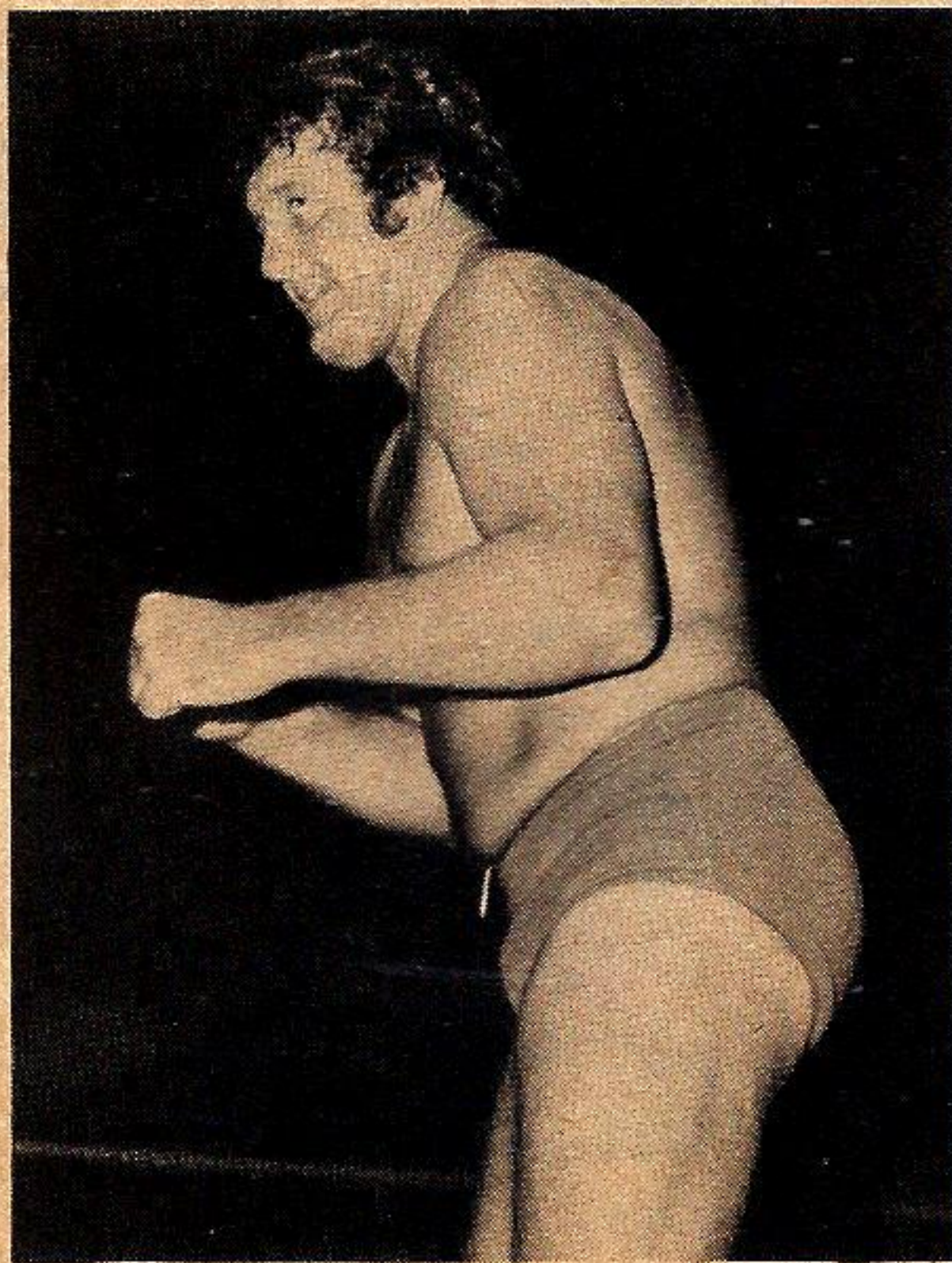
RICK STEAMBOAT

fans the days of ALEXIS SMIRNOFF are numbered. "I will run him out of this country!" vows the popular Hawaiian.

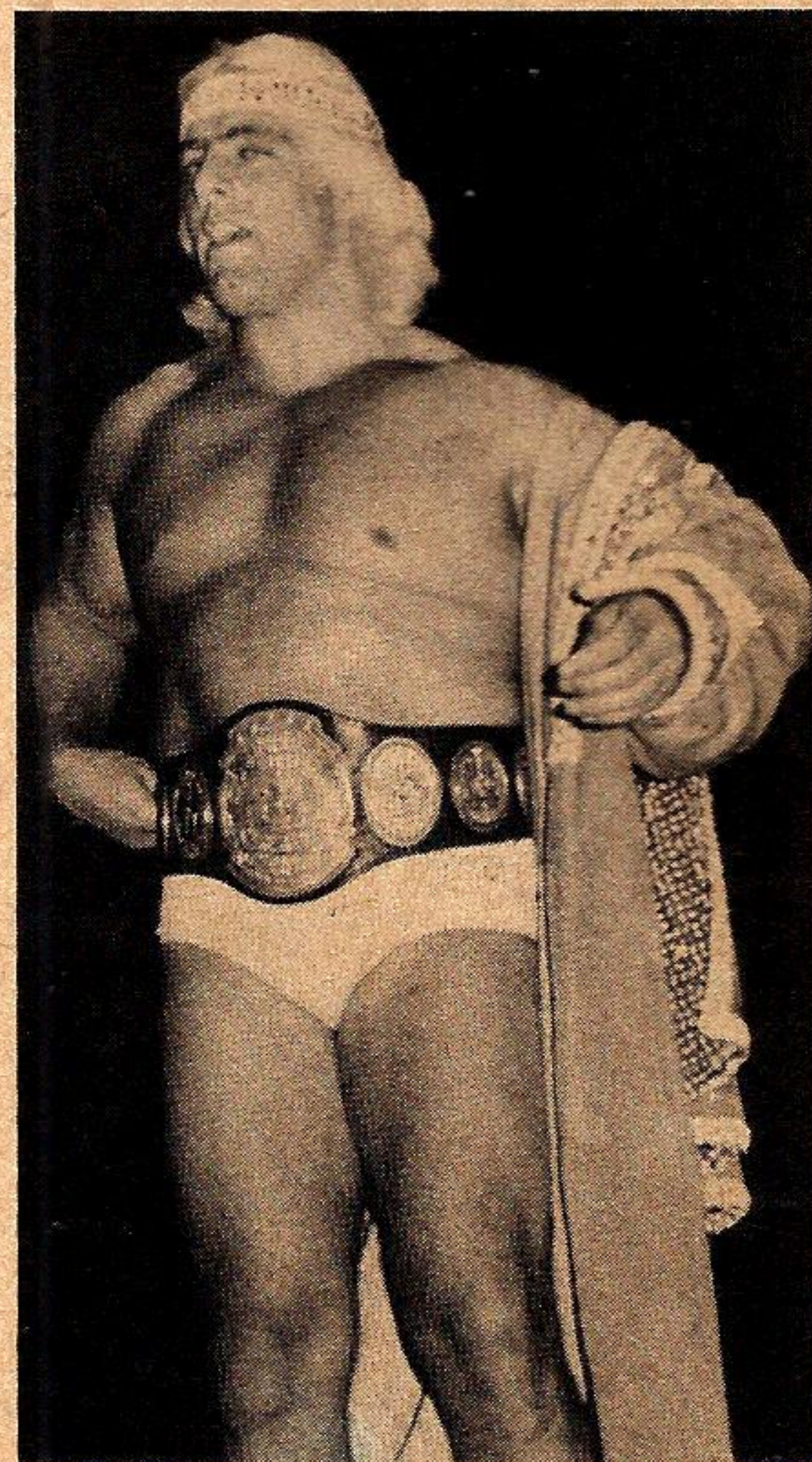
RICK STEAMBOAT thwarted the challenge of the vicious MISSOURI MAULER. Mauler, who hoped to win Rick's Mid-Atlantic television title, could not believe his own inability to finish Rick off and win the belt. The Mauler is in good company: many veteran rulebreakers have discovered Steamboat cannot be taken lightly . . . BILLY ROBINSON has earned another title match against AWA champion NICK BOCKWINKLE. But Nick's manager, BOBBY HEENAN, insists, "Robinson gets too damn many chances to wrestle for Nick's belt. He doesn't deserve this shot—but out of the goodness of my heart,

I will see that he does get this one last opportunity." . . . STAN STASIAK says he has come up with a defense to the tactic many wrestlers have devised to protect themselves against this feared and deadly heartpunch.

It's great to see ex-wrestler BUDDY COLT active as a referee in Florida rings . . . "An eye for an eye" is the philosophy of WAHOO McDANIEL. We would hate to be in the shoes of GREG VALENTINE, the man who recently broke Wahoo's ankle . . . CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW and Samoan CHIEF PETER MAIVIA have formed a tag team—and they appear to be unbeatable! Many fans feel that Maivia is a far better partner for Strongbow than any other grappler who has teamed with him in the past . . . BARON VON RASCHKE roars, "MIGHTY IGOR is an insult to this great sport! I must cripple him for life so he can no longer be an



BILLY ROBINSON



RIC FLAIR

embarrassment to a great athlete like myself."

After being stripped of the Florida title, ERNIE LADD has gone into seclusion . . . Big JOHN STUDD, a.k.a. Captain U.S.A., now holds the prestigious American heavy-weight championship . . . RIC FLAIR refuses to give BOBO BRAZIL a shot at the United States title. Ric swears he is not afraid he will lose to Brazil. "I just don't think he is worthy of wrestling me for the belt," says the rulebreaking Flair . . . CAPTAIN LOU ALBANO reports that the GOLDEN TERROR has yet to use the windup hold that could win any battle for him and permanently disable his opponent for life.

That's all for now. See you next month! □

ON THE ROAD

with
Michael B. Kape

THE SPECTRUM
PHILADELPHIA

THE OLYMPIC
LOS ANGELES

MADISON
SQUARE GARDEN
NEW YORK CITY

THE AMPHITHEATRE
CHICAGO

MAPLE LEAF
GARDEN
TORONTO

MIAMI BEACH
AUDITORIUM
MIAMI

SPORTS
DALLAS

THE KIEL
ST. LOUIS

COBURN
DETROIT

BOSTON
GARDEN
BOSTON

THE OMNI
ATLANTA

THE FAIRGROUNDS
RICHMOND

ATLANTA, GEORGIA—I thought I would just be passing through this city on my way to other places. However, circumstances forced me to extend my stay from a few minutes to a few days. In short, my car, which I bought less than a year ago, broke down horribly. It was rendered useless. My stay in Atlanta was increased substantially.

This city is really just a small Southern town which has become very big. (Remember, I am used to a city being the size of New York.) After the second day here, I found myself with nothing to do. Since I was going to be unable to complete the business I had set out for, I decided to look for a story here in Atlanta. It didn't take me long to find enough material for this column. I ran into Dick Slater at the hotel.

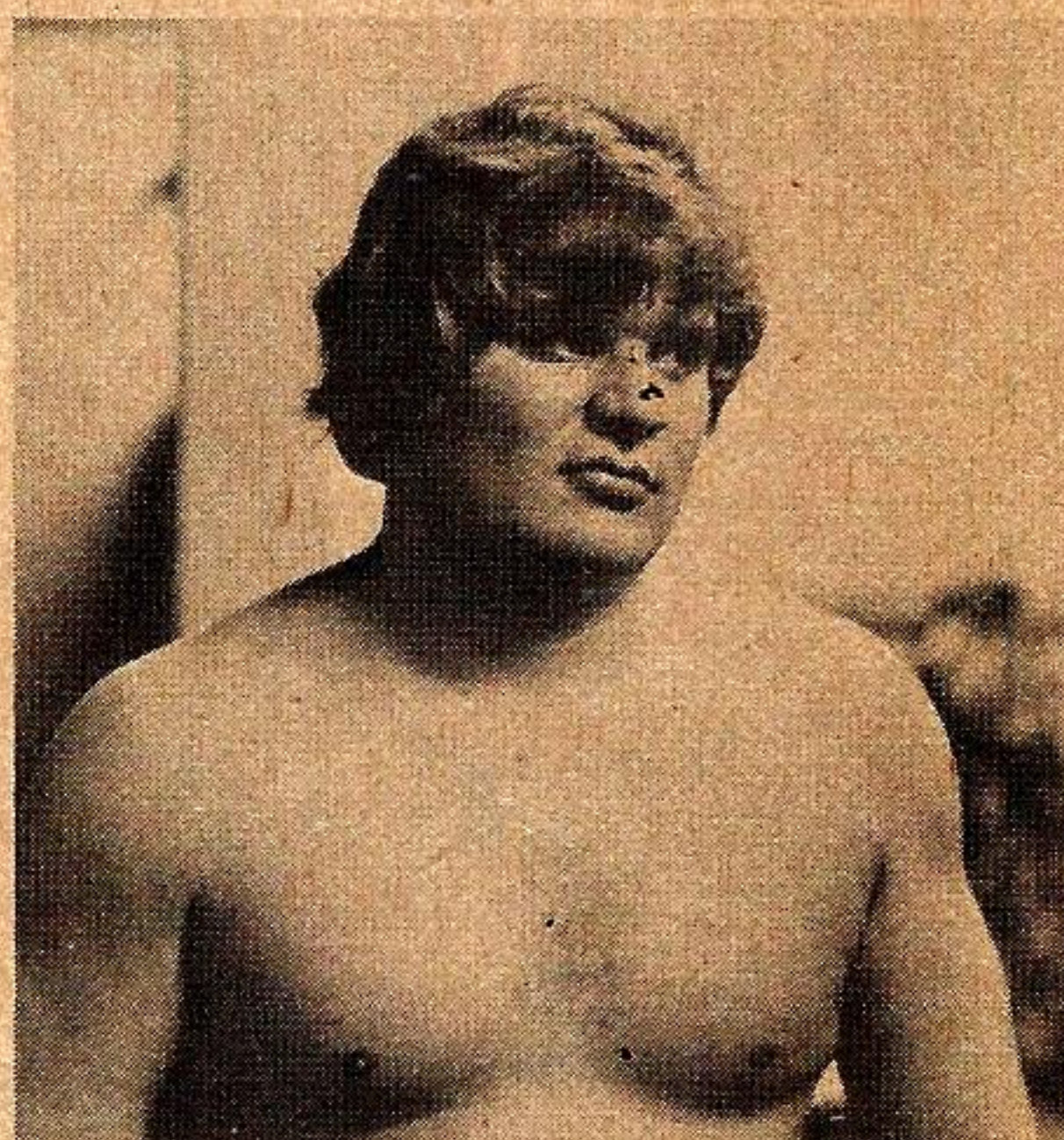
Now there are a lot of people who do not like Dick Slater. I can understand that. I did not like him the first time I met him a few years back. I thought him to be rather obnoxious, sort of like a poor relative who keeps coming back to visit. I also found him to be dreadfully dull to talk with. Egomania does not interest me. Dick Slater seemed to have the worst case I'd seen in a while.

Encountering Slater during this visit to Atlanta, I found him to be markedly changed. Indeed, I think he may have even grown up a bit. He did have a few choice things to say, and so I asked him to sit for a discussion. He agreed to do so. A formal interview was out of the question; he had just done that with one of my colleagues recently (see *INSIDE WRESTLING*/November 1977). I was interested in different areas than that interview covered.

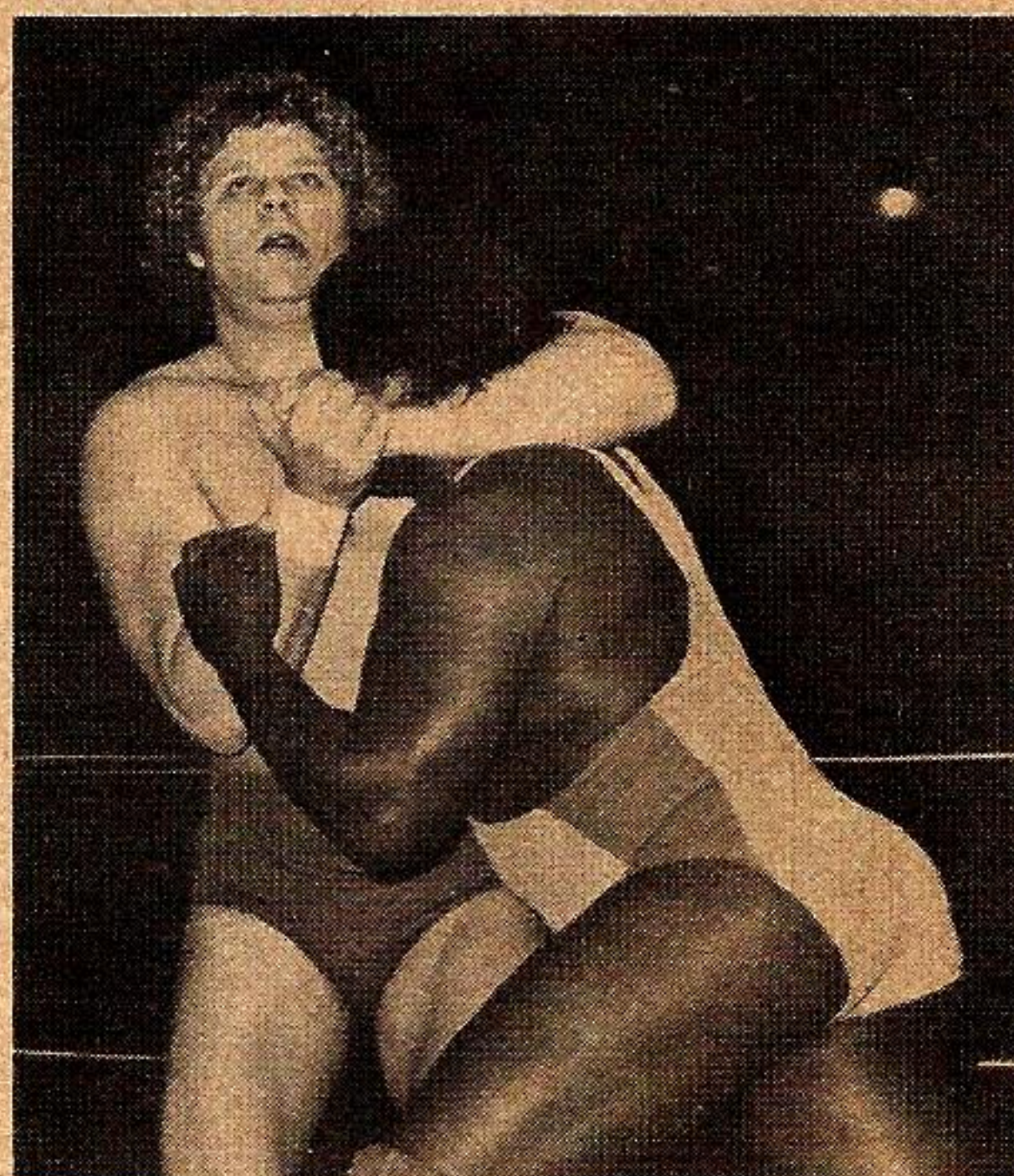
"Frankly," Dick told me, "I don't much care what I tell reporters anymore. They usually twist around what I say, with a few exceptions. Some of the reporters your magazine sends out are all

right. But most of the ones I have to deal with don't like me because of what I've done to their favorite wrestlers. What ever happened to the objective press?"

Slater was touching on a subject I have had to deal with often: members of the press corps who have spoiled things for the rest of us. I will not mention names; it's



Dick Slater (above) is disgusted with the coverage he received in the press. He says the reports reflect badly on him and his matches, like the one against Tom Jones (below).



unnecessary. However, there are reporters who do play favorites with the wrestlers, giving good publicity to men they like and making men they don't like look bad. It is not a practice I approve of. I could easily understand Slater's attitude. I had encountered it many times before from many other wrestlers. I said as much to him.

(Continued on page 56)

NEWS FROM THE

If you would like your area of the country represented in these reports, while also being officially credited with your own by-line, send us reports of the matches you attend. You will have the thrill of seeing your name in an internationally known magazine while at the same time helping to improve the quality of wrestling in your area. So why not give it a try? You will be glad you did!

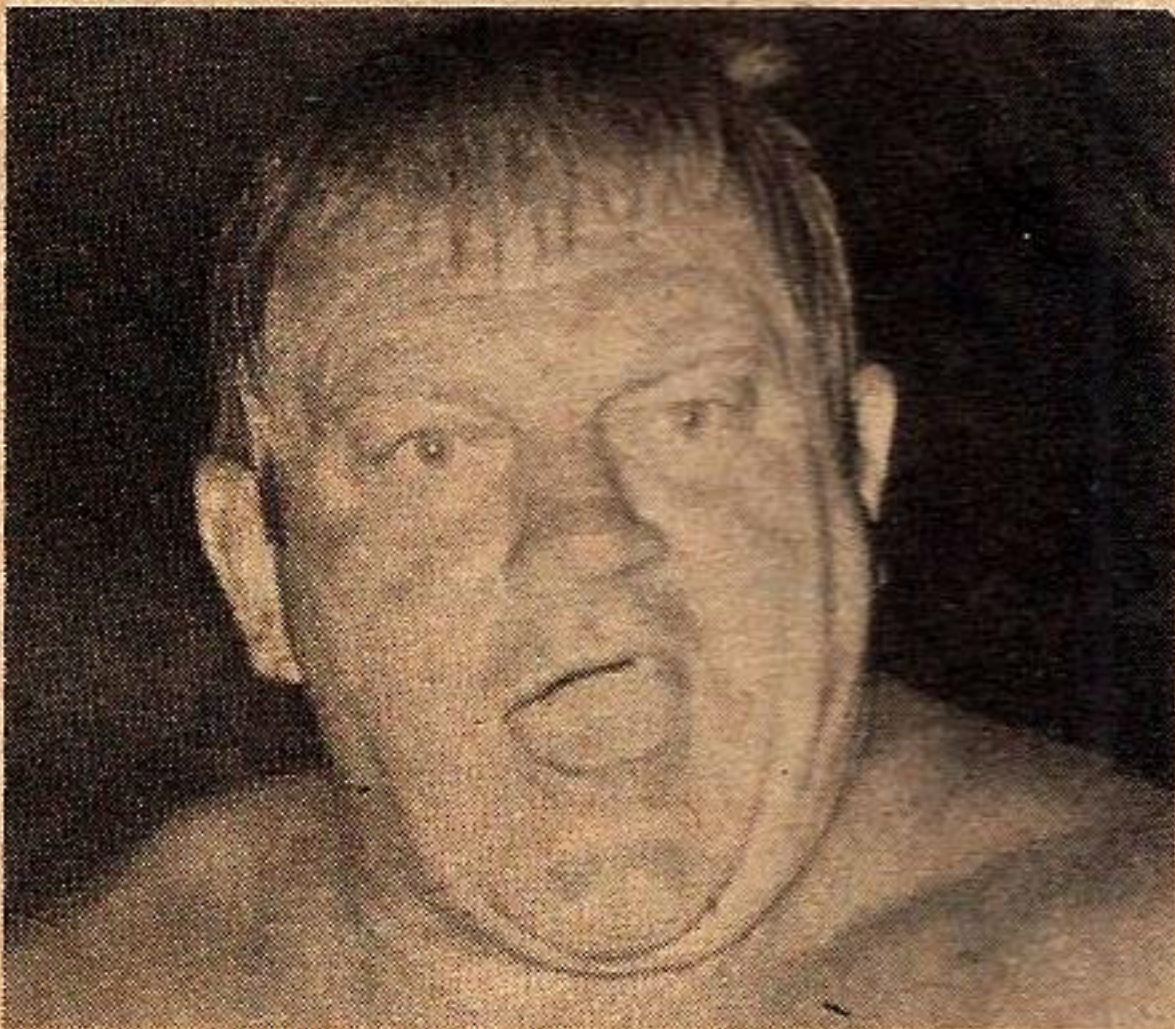
Send your reports to: Correspondent Editor, Box 38, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571.

CHICAGO, ILL.

By Keith Buckley



**SUPER DESTROYER
vs.
BRUISER**

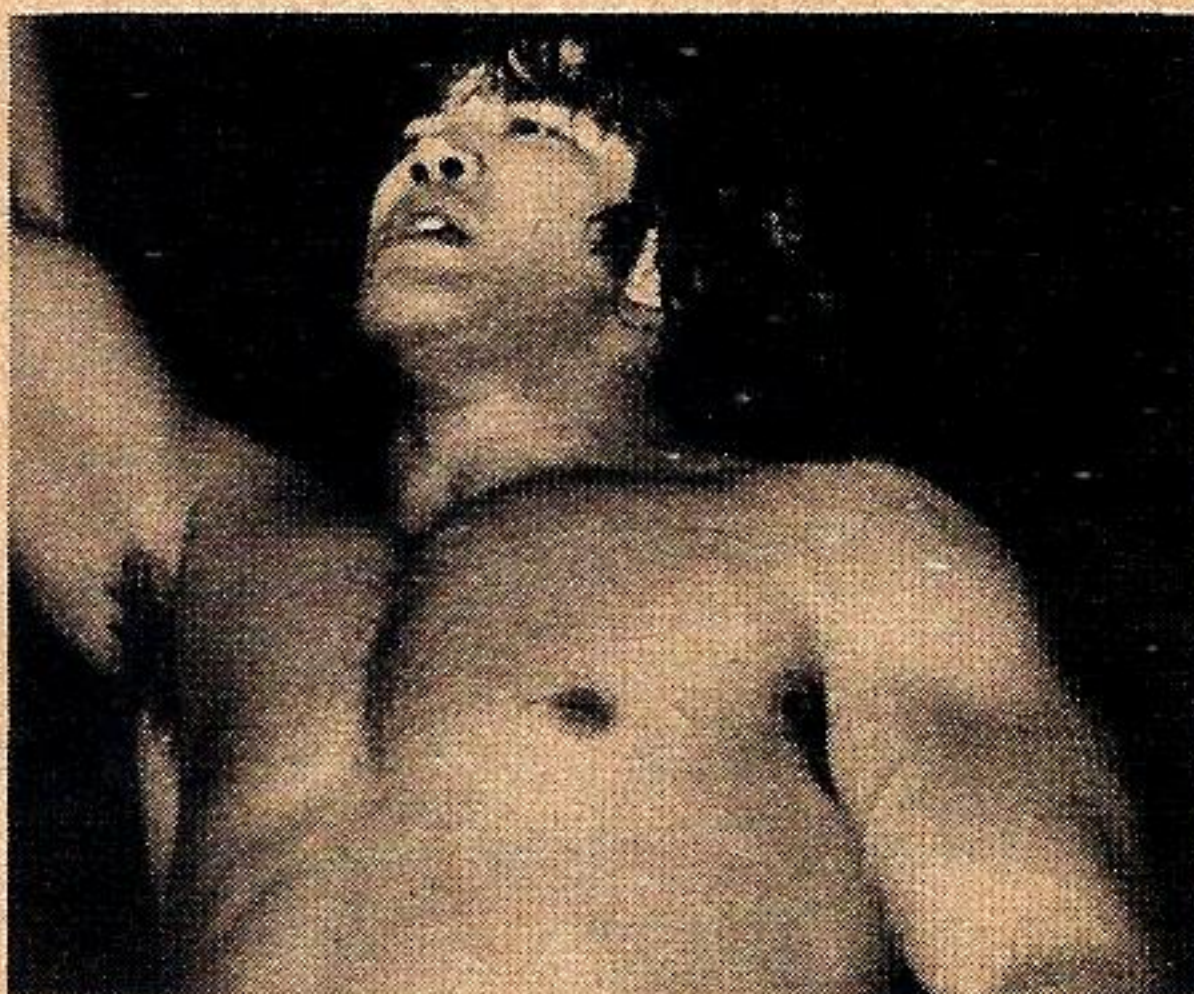


A grudge match which has been in the making for months finally took place as Super Destroyer and Bruiser battled. After 10 minutes of great action, Super Destroyer was disqualified when his friend, Angelo Mosca, was caught interfering.

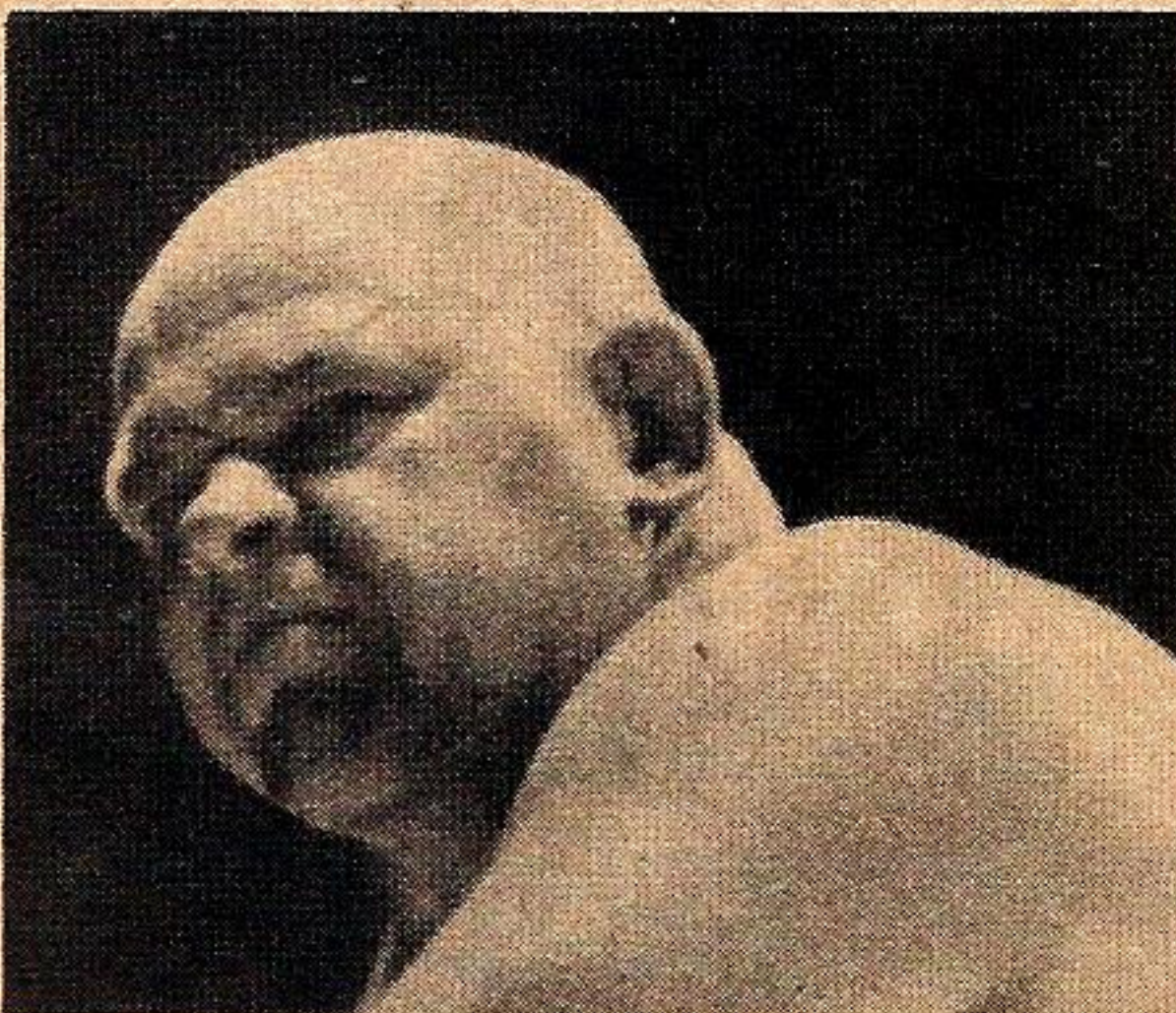
OTHER BOUTS: Ray Stevens came within a hair of winning Nick Bockwinkle's AWA belt before being disqualified . . . Newly-crowned AWA tag team champs Jim Brunzell and Greg Gagne successfully defended their belts against the Valiant brothers.

GREENSBORO, N.C.

By Horace H. Terry Jr.



**RICK STEAMBOAT
vs.
BARON VON RASCHKE**



Young sensation Rick Steamboat proved he's truly a superstar by surviving the worst of Baron Von Raschke's brain claw. Young Steamboat was victorious over the Baron in a very, very controversial decision.

OTHER BOUTS: Greg Valentine successfully defended his Mid-Atlantic belt against Paul Jones—but only because Jones was disqualified . . . Ric Flair was disqualified for using brass knucks on Dusty Rhodes.

WINNIPEG, CANADA

By Bill Matthes



**GENE KINISKI
vs.
ANGELO MOSCA**



Former NWA champion Gene Kiniski was cheated out of a victory by Angelo Mosca—with illegal help from Super Destroyer. Big Gene has vowed revenge, and Mosca, apparently afraid, claims he won't give Kiniski a rematch.

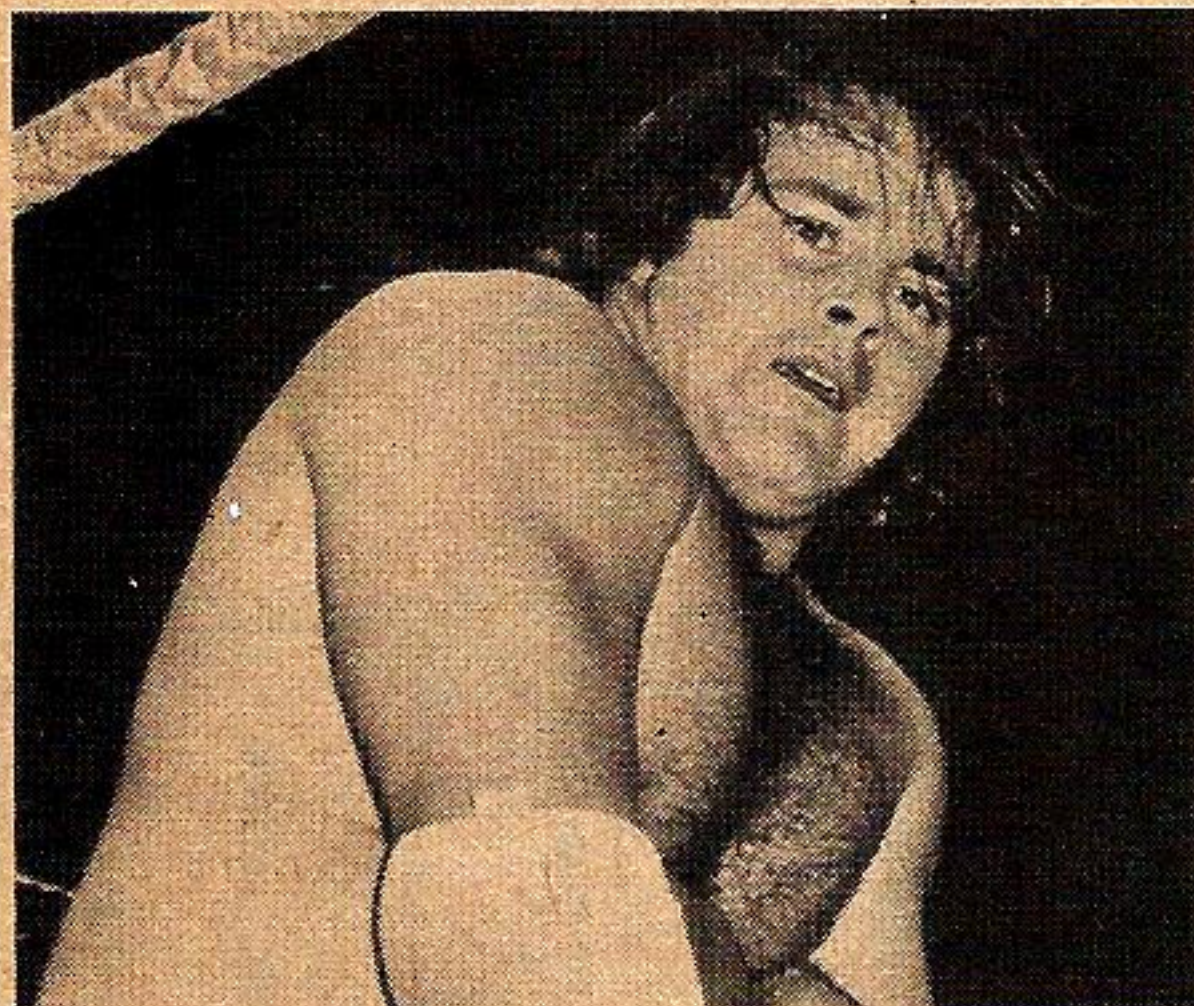
OTHER BOUTS: Larry Hennig stopped Roger Kirby . . . Jim Brunzell and Verne Gagne, who was subbing for son Greg, were victorious over former AWA champions Blackjack Lanza and Bob Duncum in a wild, no-holds-barred brawl.

WRESTLING CAPITALS



SAN FRANCISCO, CALIF.

By Craig Ontiveros



KEVIN SULLIVAN
vs.
STAR WARRIOR

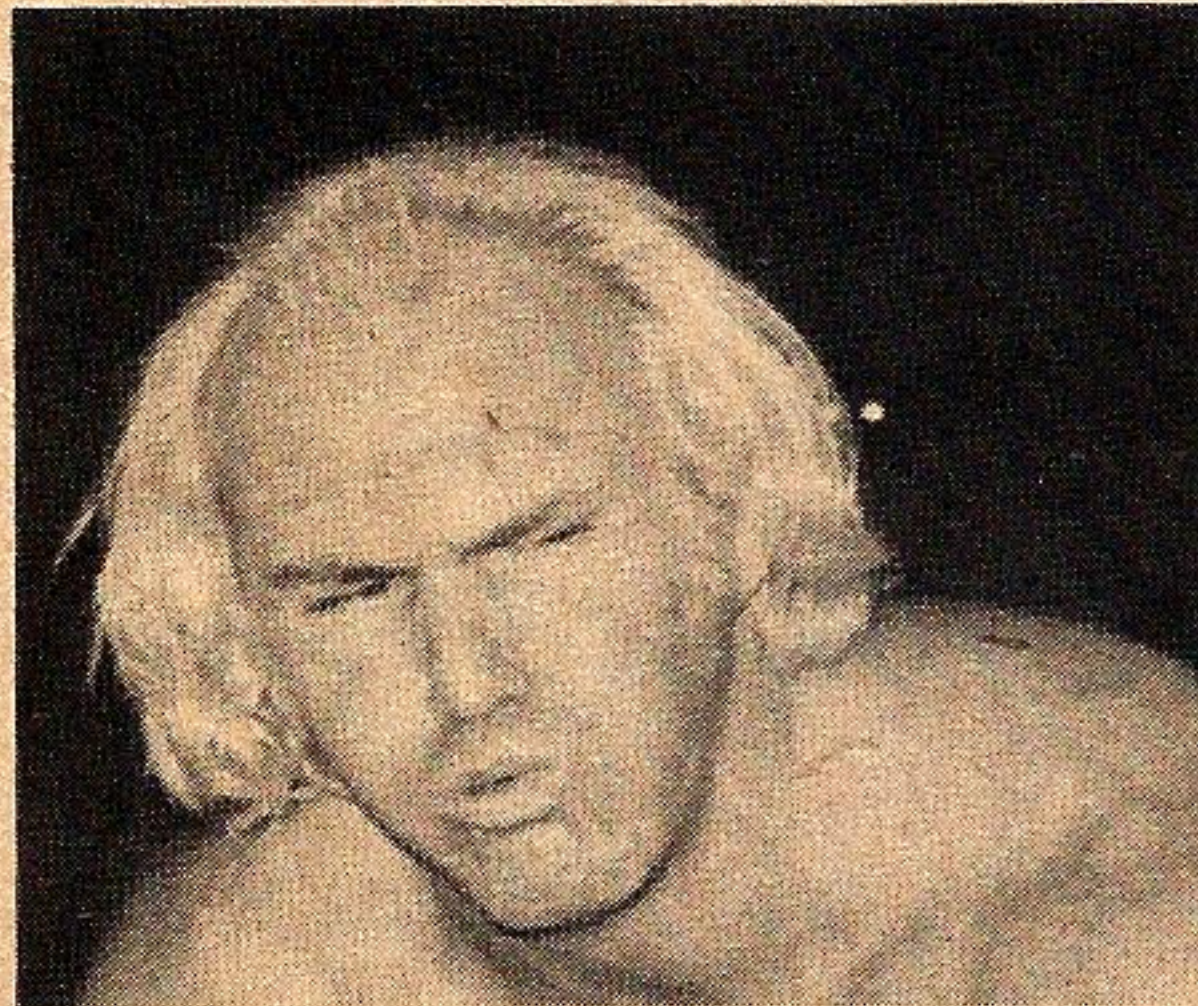


Kevin Sullivan beat a masked grappler named "Star Warrior" in a special unmasking match. After the cowl was ripped off Star Warrior's head it turned out to be none other than Kevin's old arch-enemy, Bob Roop.

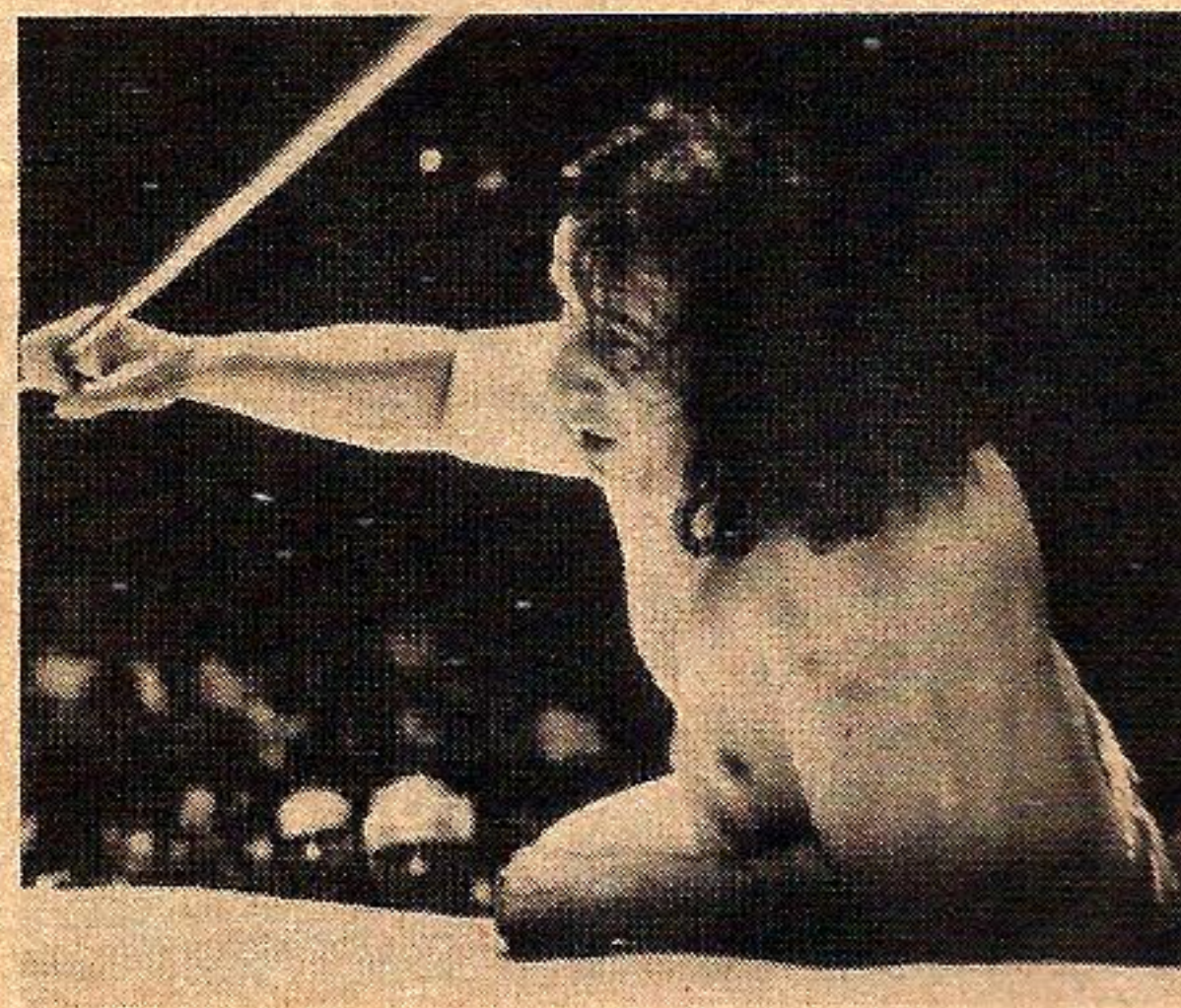
OTHER BOUTS: Dean Ho retained his U.S. title by conking Alexis Smirnoff . . . The Von Steigers stole a victory from Pepper Gomez and Chavo Guerrero . . . Mr. X proved too strong for Jerri Monti.

BOSTON, MASS

By John Shay



SUPERSTAR GRAHAM
vs.
CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW



What many people believe to be Superstar Graham's toughest match took place here at the Boston Garden against Jay Strongbow. The two battled for over 20 minutes before both men were counted out. Promoters are now working on a return bout to be held in a steel cage.

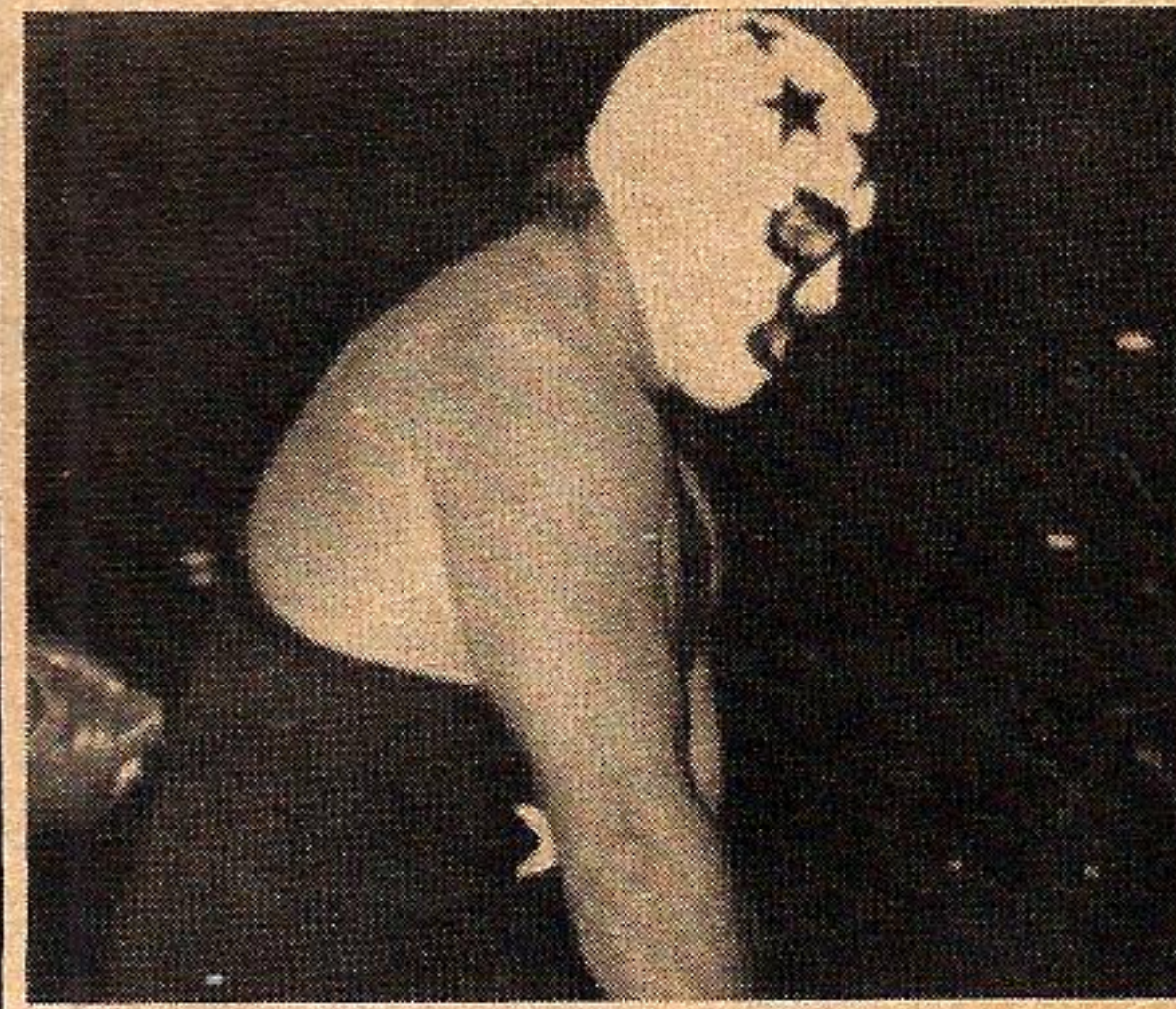
OTHER BOUTS: Bruno Sammartino stopped Mr. Fuji . . . George Steele was disqualified against Gorilla Monsoon . . . Ivan Putski and Haystacks Calhoun were just too strong for Ken Patera and Lou Albano.

NORFOLK, VA.

By Wally Paris

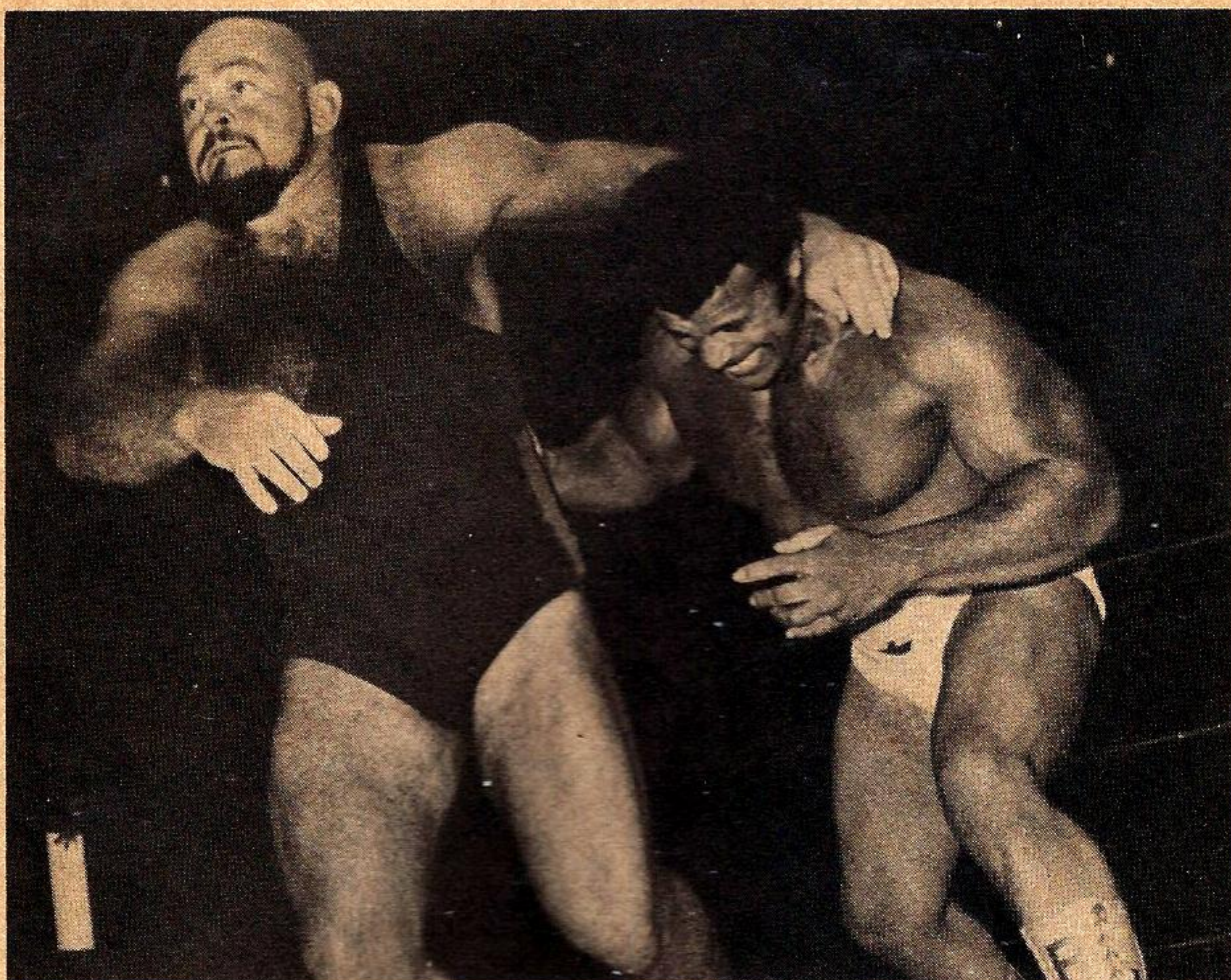


MIGHTY IGOR
vs.
MASKED SUPERSTAR



A wild Lumberjack Match proved a heartbreaking setting as Mighty Igor and Masked Superstar met. When the referee's head was turned, Missouri Mauler snuck into the ring and kayoed Igor with a hunk of iron. Chalk up an undeserved victory for Masked Superstar.

OTHER BOUTS: Wahoo McDaniel regained his U.S. belt with a spectacular triumph over hated foe Ric Flair . . . Baron Von Raschke stomped Johnny Weaver.



Above: Koloff waves the Russian flag to infuriate the fans and taunt Johnson. Left: Koloff drags Rocky by the neck and has the grappler stumbling across the mat.

HOW ROCKY JOHNSON BECAME A MARTYR FOR AMERICA

WEARY, WOUNDED, BRUISED, battered, but not broken, Rocky Johnson made his way to the dressing room. The fans were on their feet, many with tears streaking down their faces. The applause built as Rocky slowly made his way down the aisle.

Then some voice in the crowd began singing "God Bless America." Slowly people joined until everyone was singing the patriotic hymn. As the last strains, "My home sweet home!", rent the air, Rocky disappeared into the

dressing room. People continued to stand and applaud for three minutes afterward.

Exhausted from the emotional incident, people sank into their chairs instead of leaving the arena. The cavernous building was strangely hushed. Only the sound of quiet weeping disturbed the silence.

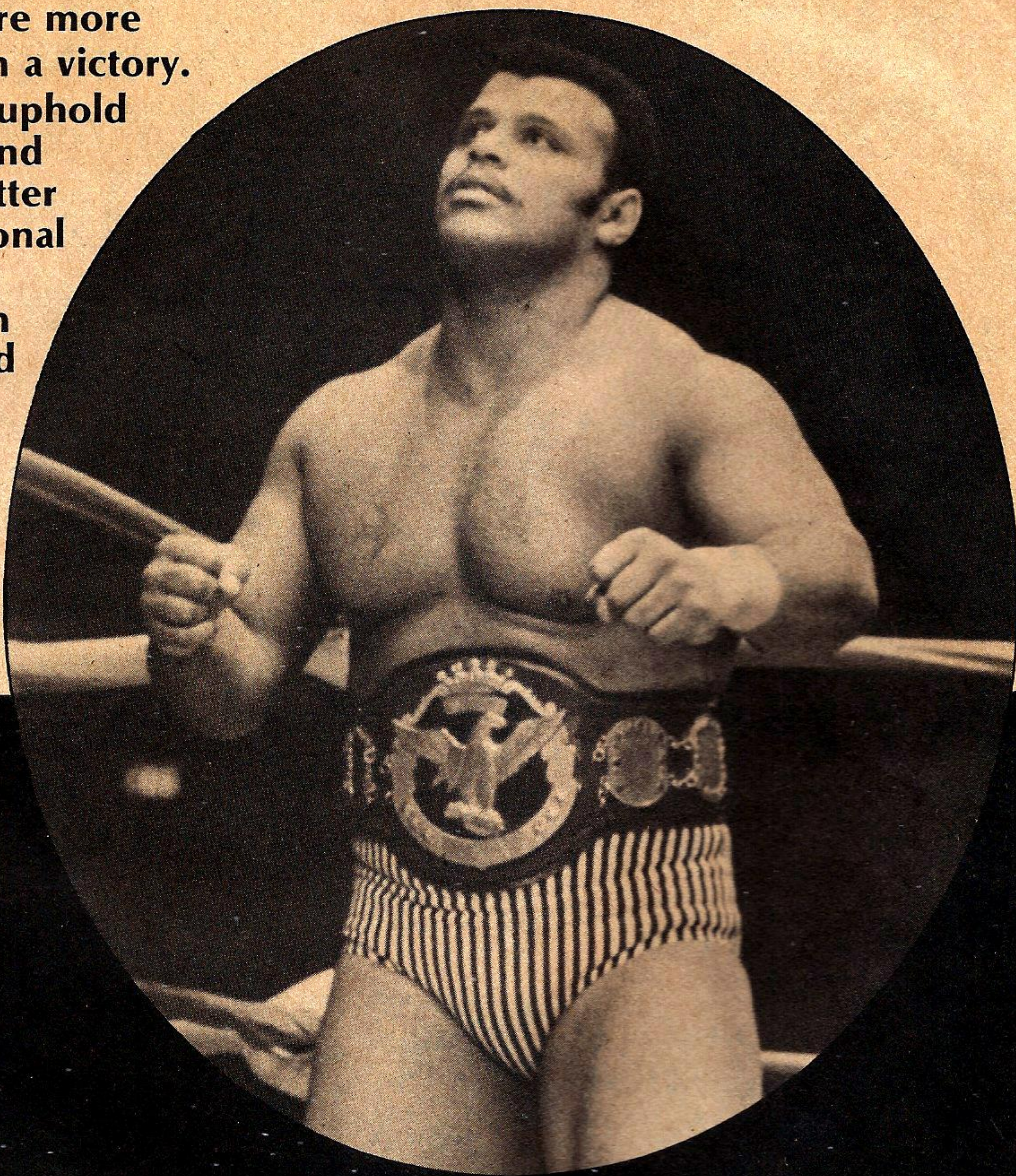
Slowly, people recovered enough to start leaving. "The man is a hero!" some said; "he's more a martyr," others mournfully added. "He took that punishment for us,"

everyone agreed. "May Ivan Koloff spend eternity in hell!" was the general consensus.

When everyone else had long since gone home, Rocky Johnson wandered back into the arena. A few friends were with him, since the weakened man might not be able to stand for too long without aid. Rocky managed to climb back in the ring and walked to the center. He turned slowly and stared into the cavernous emptiness. "I wanted them to be proud of me. I wanted Americans to be proud." Rocky

Some things are more important than a victory. A man has to uphold ideals, truth, and justice, no matter what the personal sacrifice. Rocky Johnson knows this and has suffered for this knowledge. We are all a little greater because of him!

JOHNSON TYR



PHOTOS BY PAUL BAUMAN

stood tall for a second, then his legs buckled. He stumbled to the ropes and used them to maintain his balance.

A friend had to drive him home.

What had turned Rocky Johnson into a martyr for America? The answer is Ivan Koloff, known as the Russian Bear, although no country would proudly claim him as a citizen. The man is one of the most violently reprehensible athletes wrestling has ever known. Before his match against Johnson, he made a

shocking pronouncement.

"Americans talk a lot about fair play," he declared, "and it makes me sick. Nobody in this country wrestles fairly. It's a waste of time even talking about it. And Rocky Johnson is just like most Americans. He'll talk about wrestling fairly but cheats like everyone else. That's the American way."

Johnson bristled at the words. "Koloff is a lying fool. I'll wrestle fairly no matter what Ivan does. He'll learn fairness is more than

just talk. I'll be fair for America."

Patriotism can lead to tragic consequences. Johnson's vow put him at a grave disadvantage. Trying to wrestle honestly against Koloff's cheating is comparable to trying to stop a tornado by blowing at it. The man's savagery must be met with equal brutality. Any other way of wrestling Koloff is hopeless. However, something meant more to Rocky Johnson than winning.

The night of the match, Johnson stood tall and proud in his corner.

(Continued on page 50)

TOP WRESTLER

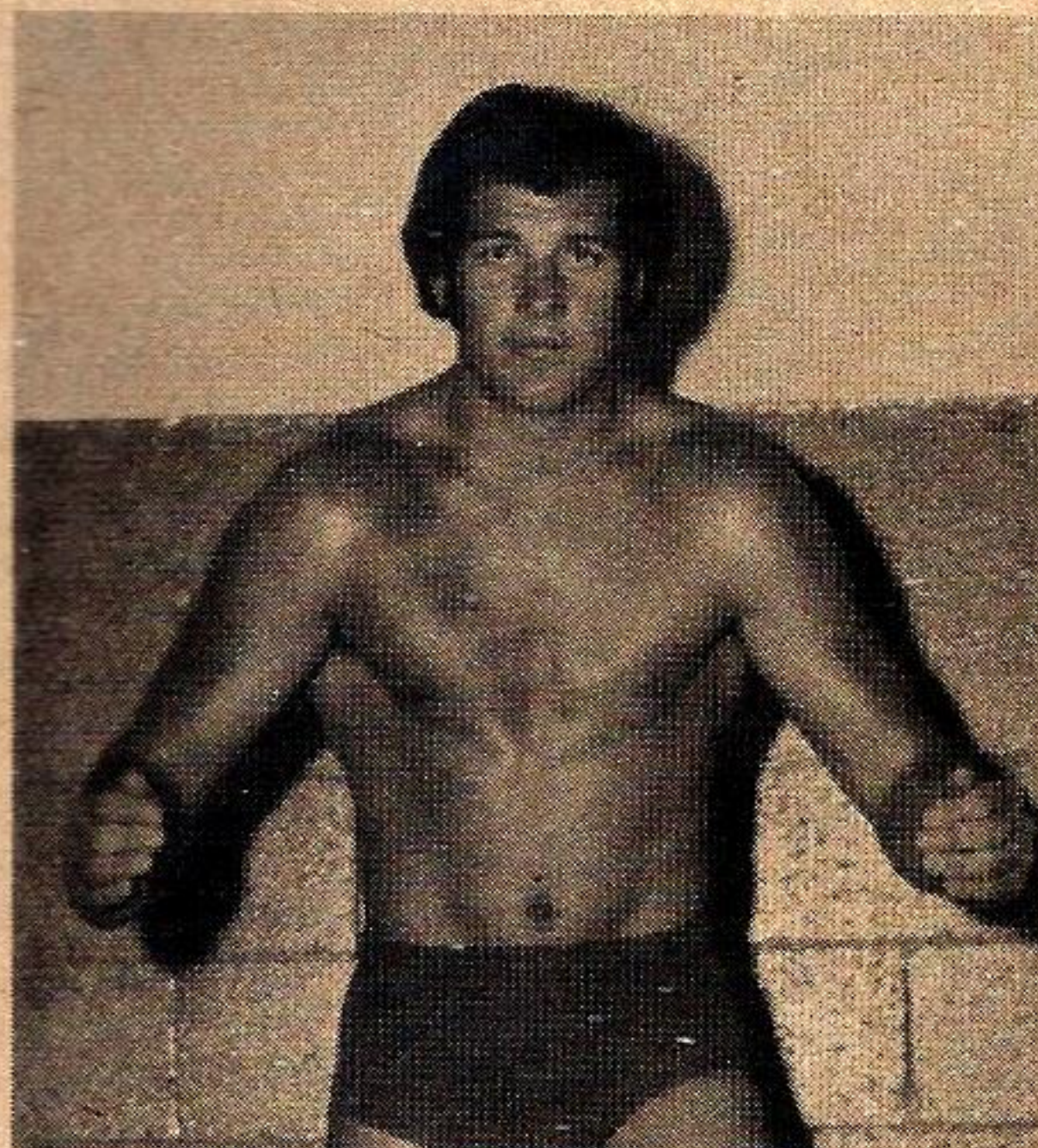
YOUR QUESTION

Do you have a question which concerns all of wrestling? Well, each month in **INSIDE WRESTLING**, the sport's greatest stars will answer a question sent in by a reader. If you wish to have your question answered by the stars, send it to: **ASK THE STARS, INSIDE WRESTLING, Box 58, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571**

The "Question of the Month" is:

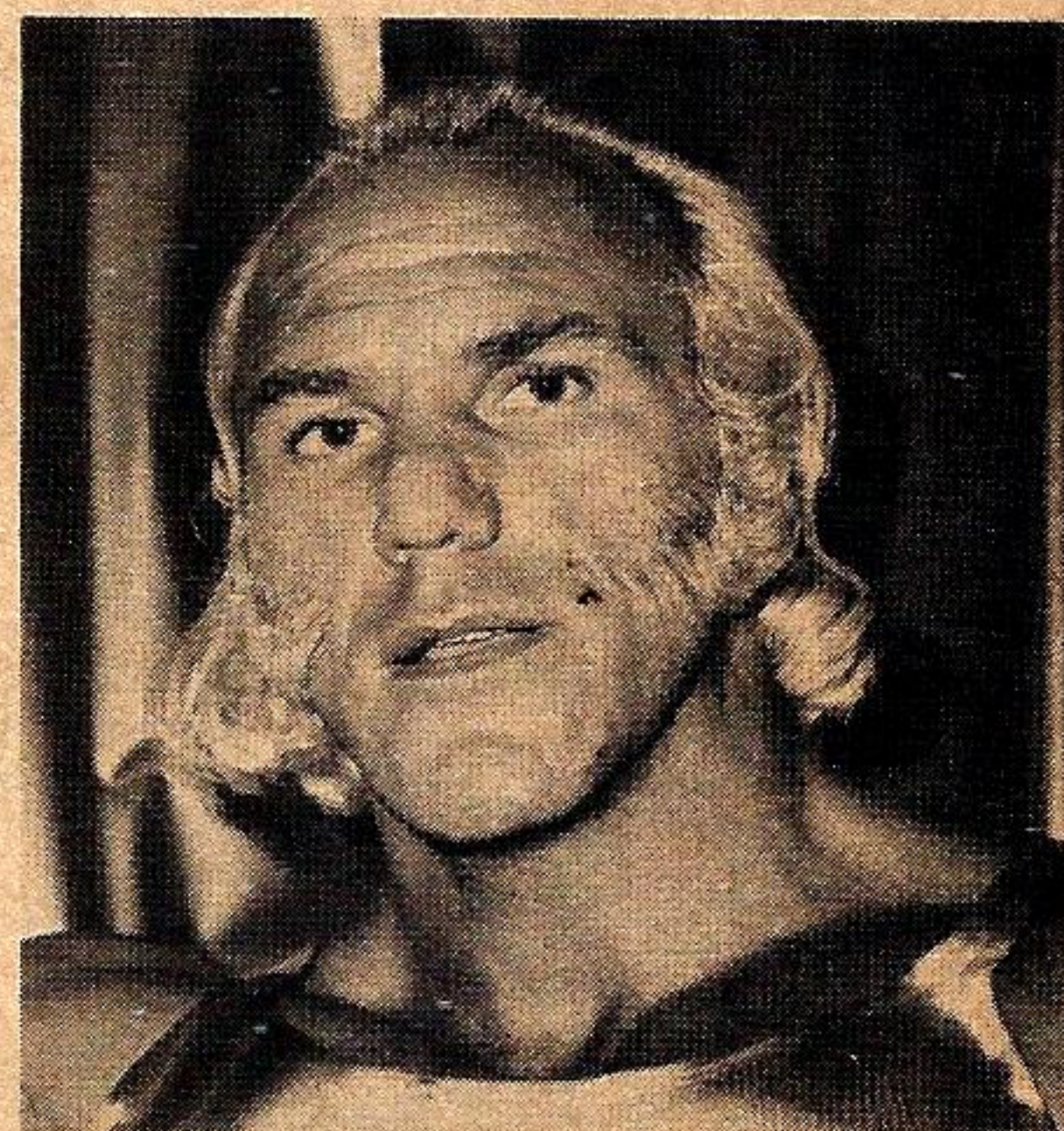
"Had you not gone into professional wrestling, what other career would you have entered?"

**Submitted by:
Terry Copeland;
Philadelphia,
Mississippi
and
Jennifer
Weinreich:
Old Bridge,
New Jersey**



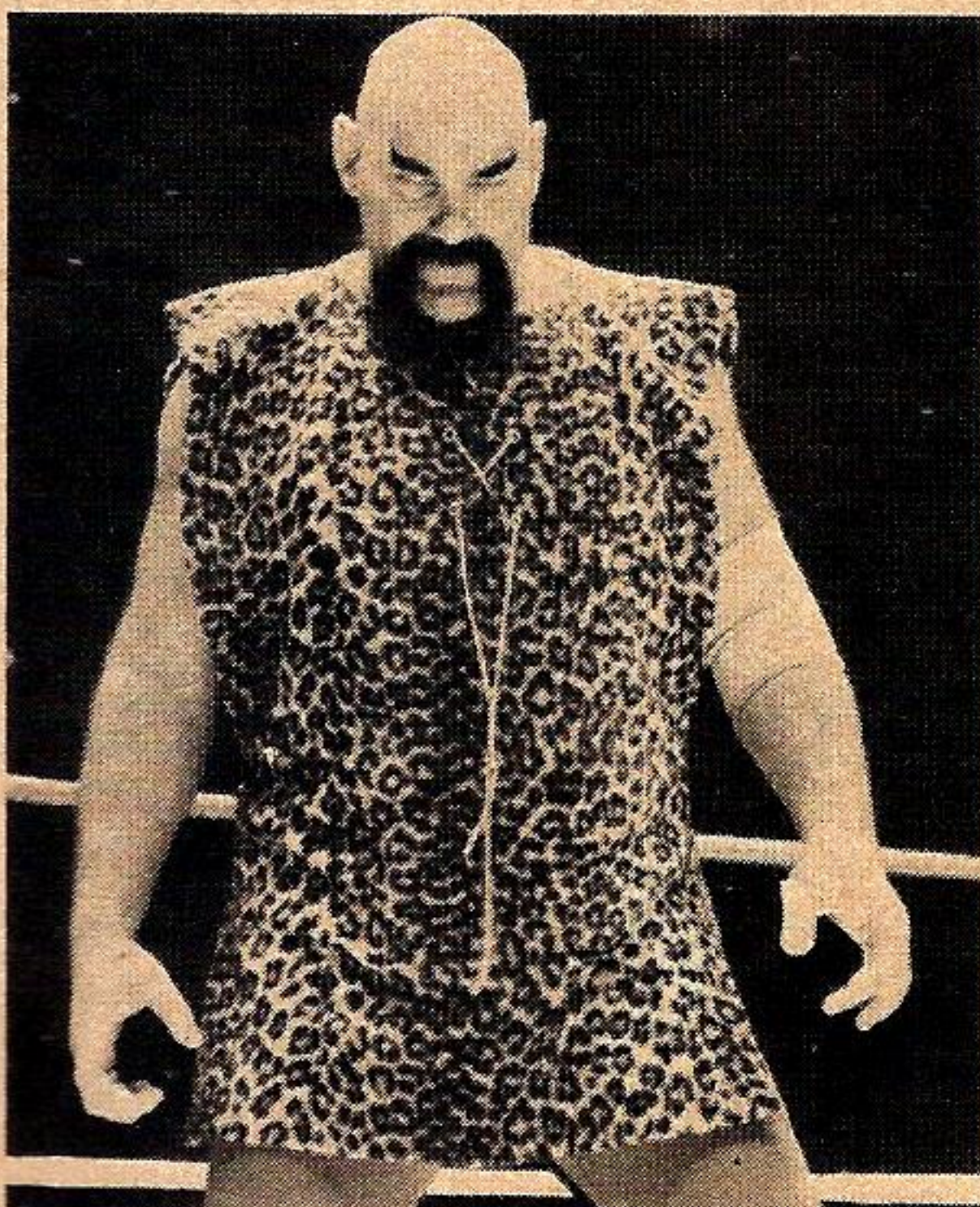
GREG GAGNE

"I was always destined to be a professional wrestler, especially since my father is one. Yet there was a time when I was considering a career as a football player. It is an exciting sport, and I think I would have done well."



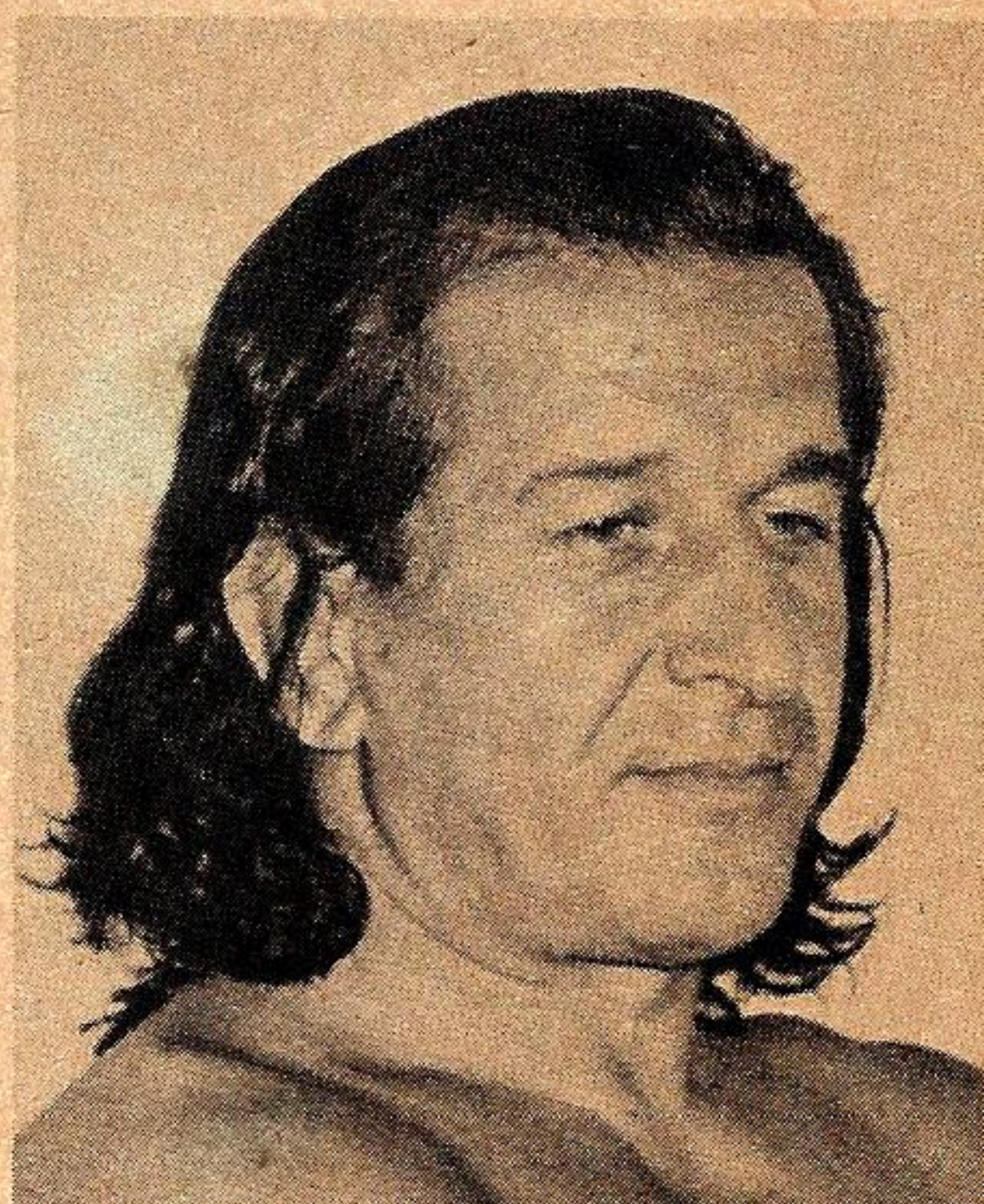
SUPERSTAR GRAHAM

"Hollywood was calling me day and night! They wanted me to star in motion pictures. I could have become a dashing matinee idol. But wrestling fans can thank their lucky stars that I chose to enter this great sport. Without me, wrestling would be a bore!"



OX BAKER

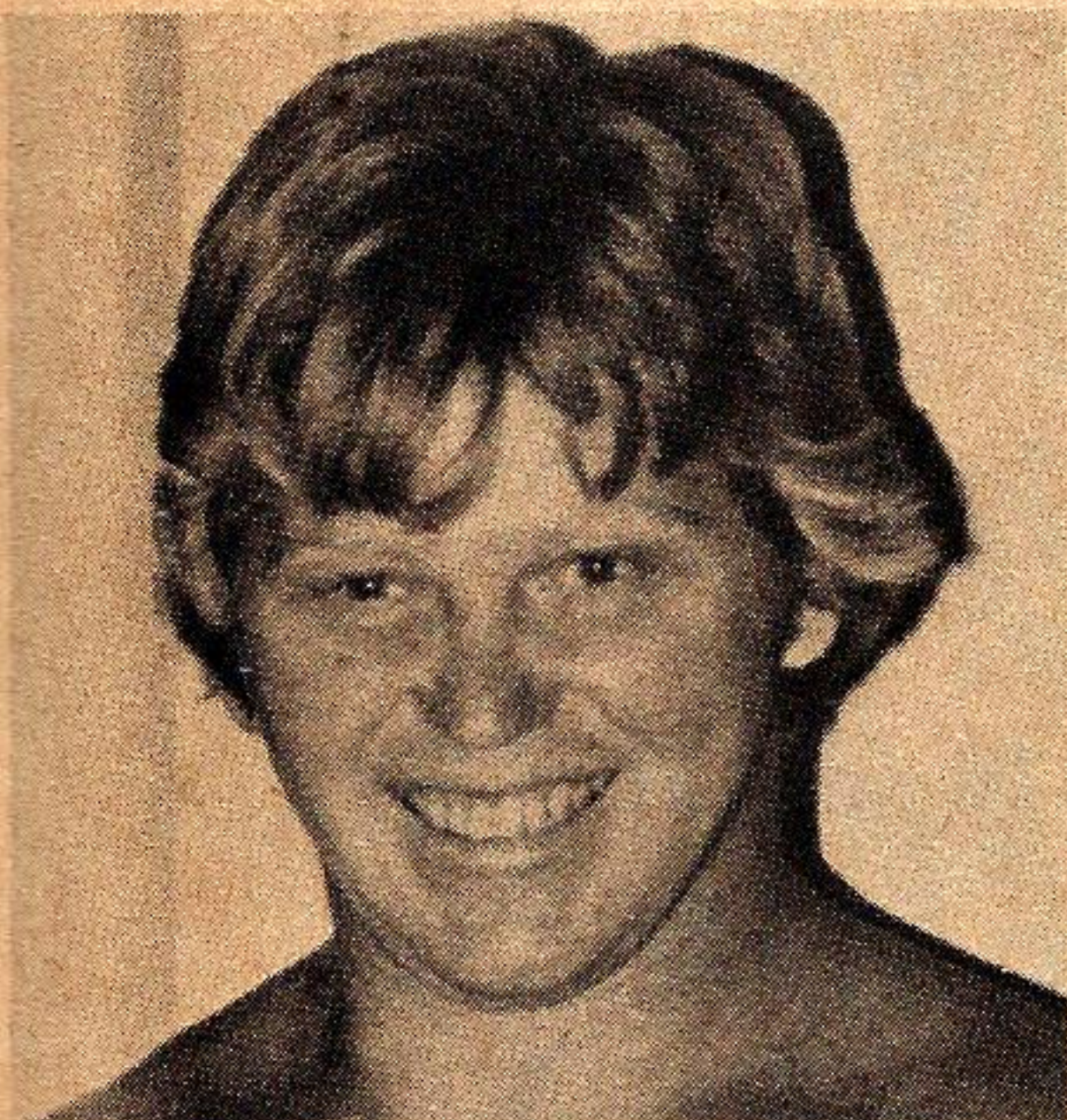
"I could have done anything. Ox Baker is a man whose talents are versatile. Be it as a teacher, a scientist, a movie star, or a bum, I would have been a great success."



CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW

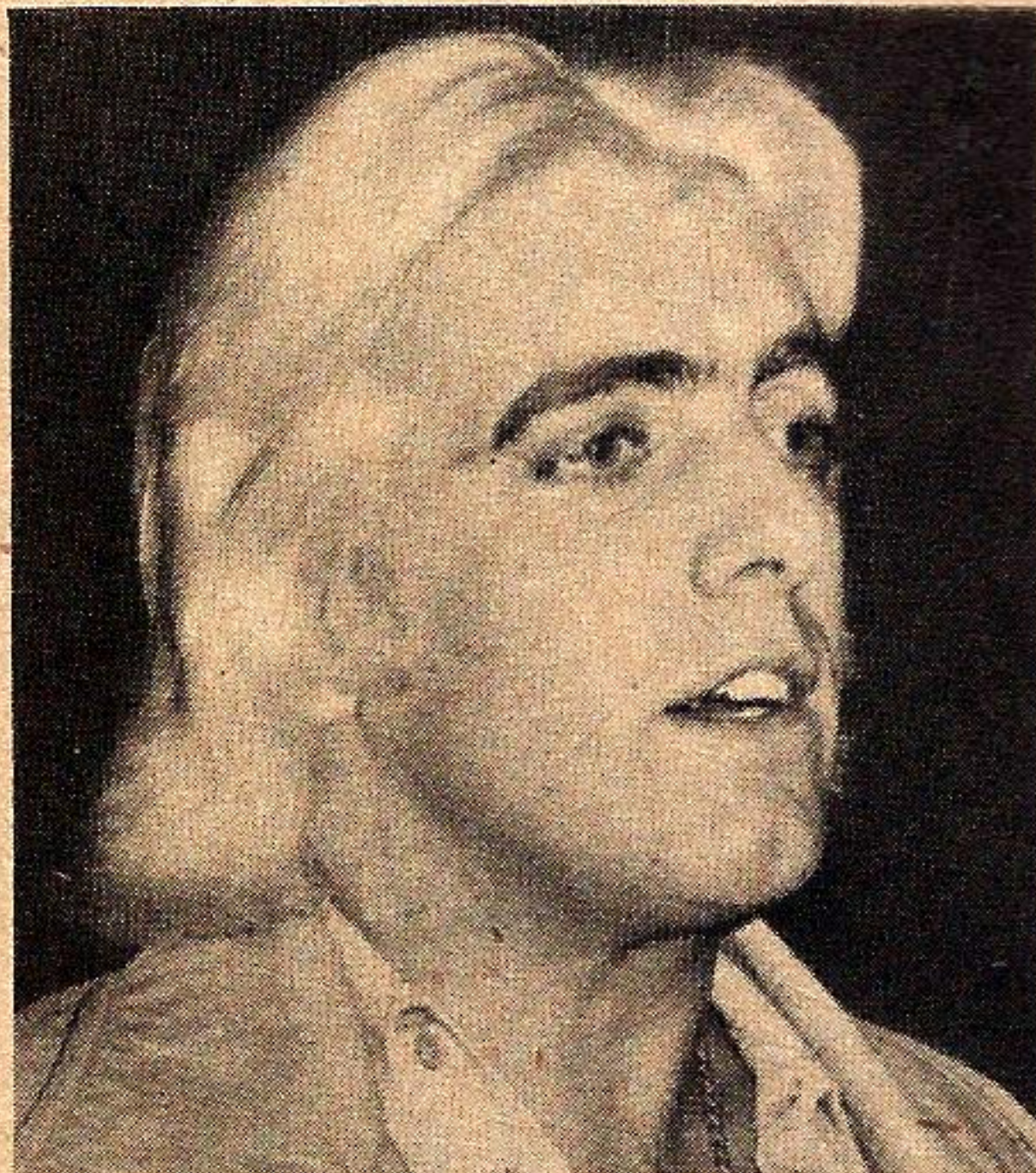
"The only other thing I like beside wrestling is farming. Had I not gone into the sport, I would have followed a farming career. It might not have been a well-paying career, but at least I would have enjoyed it."

ERS ANSWER OF THE MONTH



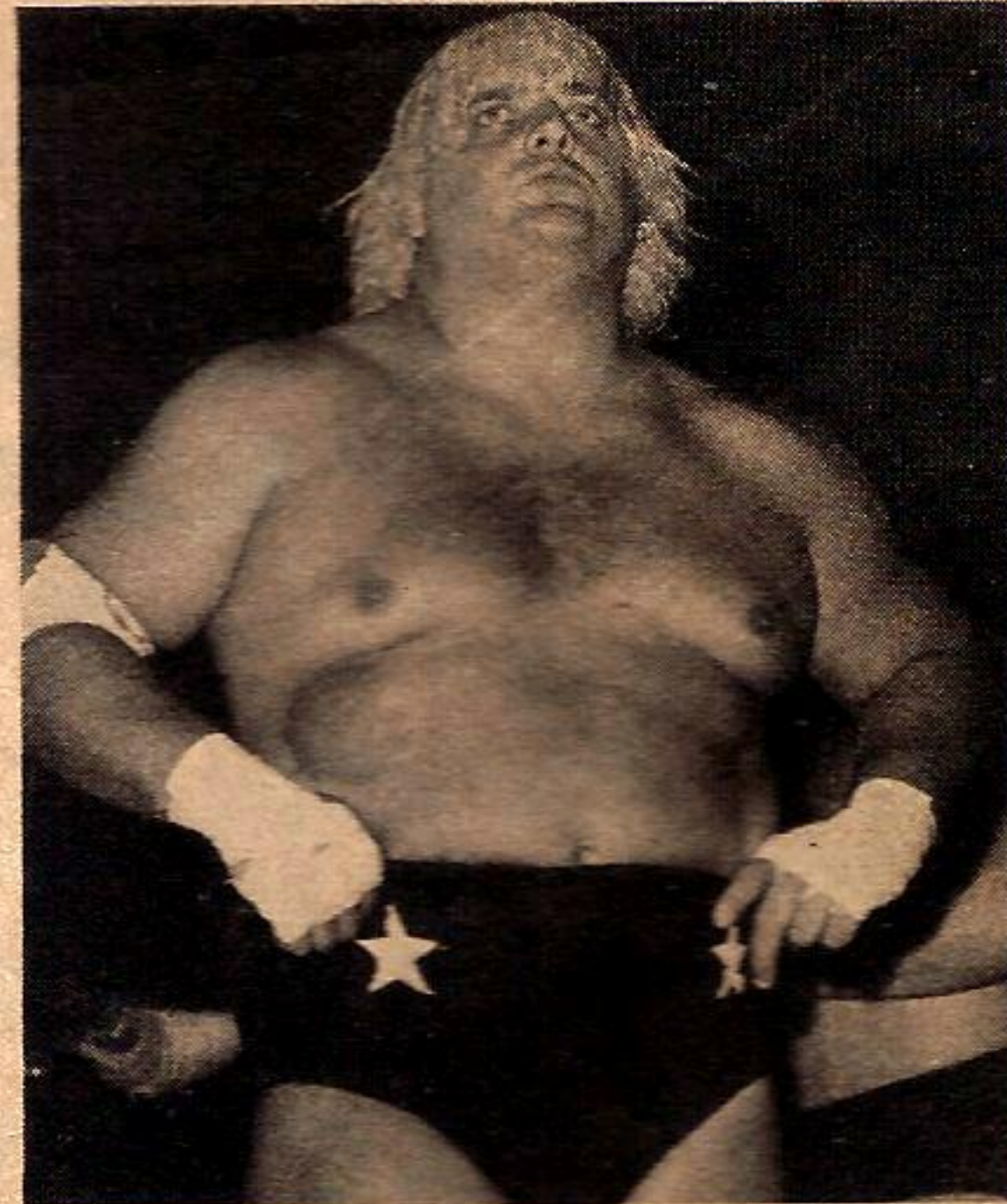
BOB BACKLUND

"When I was still in college, considered having a career in biology. It was one of my favorite subjects, and I really enjoyed studying it. As a matter of fact, I still read the biological journals whenever I can just to keep informed on the subject."



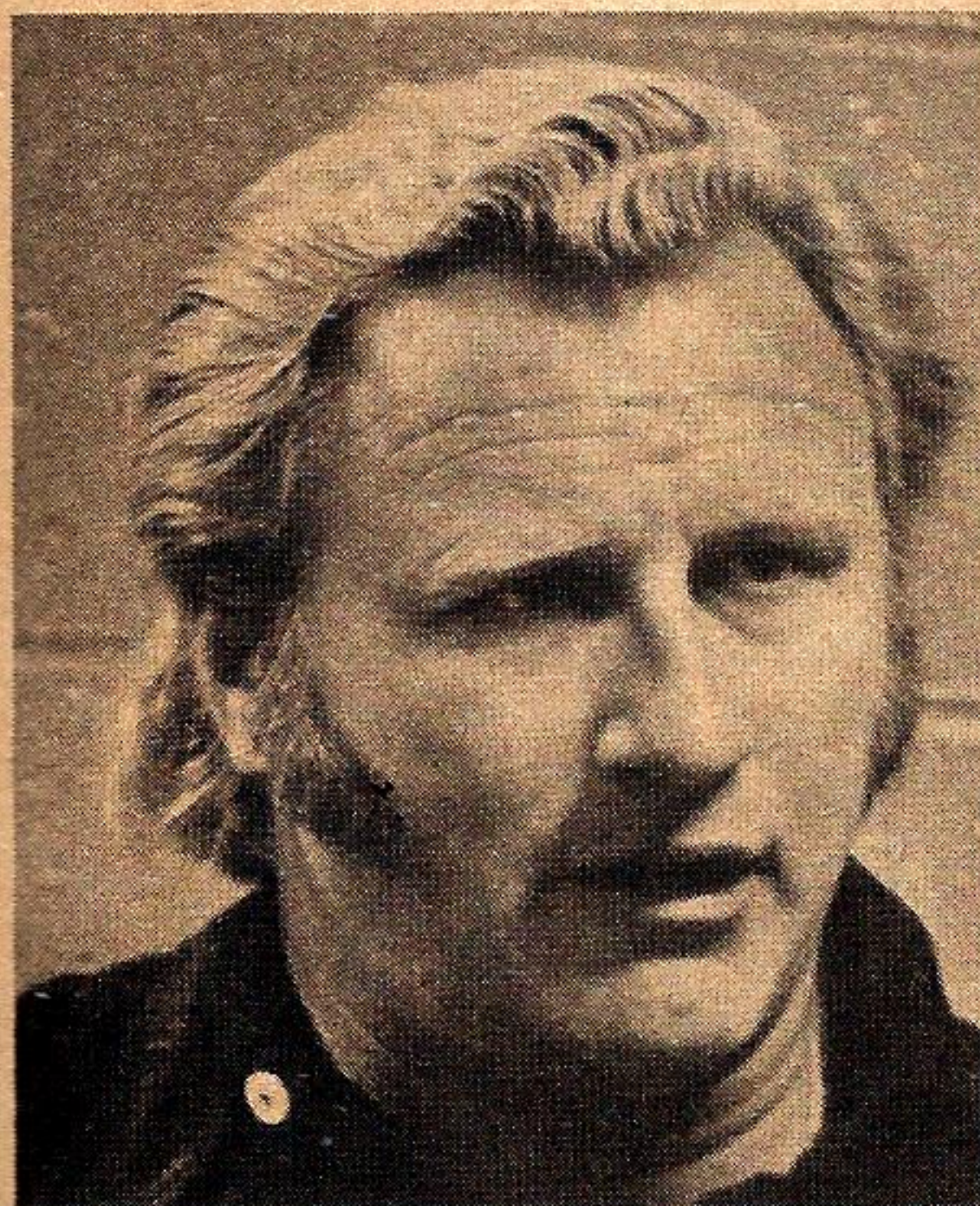
RIC FLAIR

"If I hadn't become a professional wrestler, I would have gone into athletic coaching. I am an all-around athlete and would have become a great coach at any college in the world."



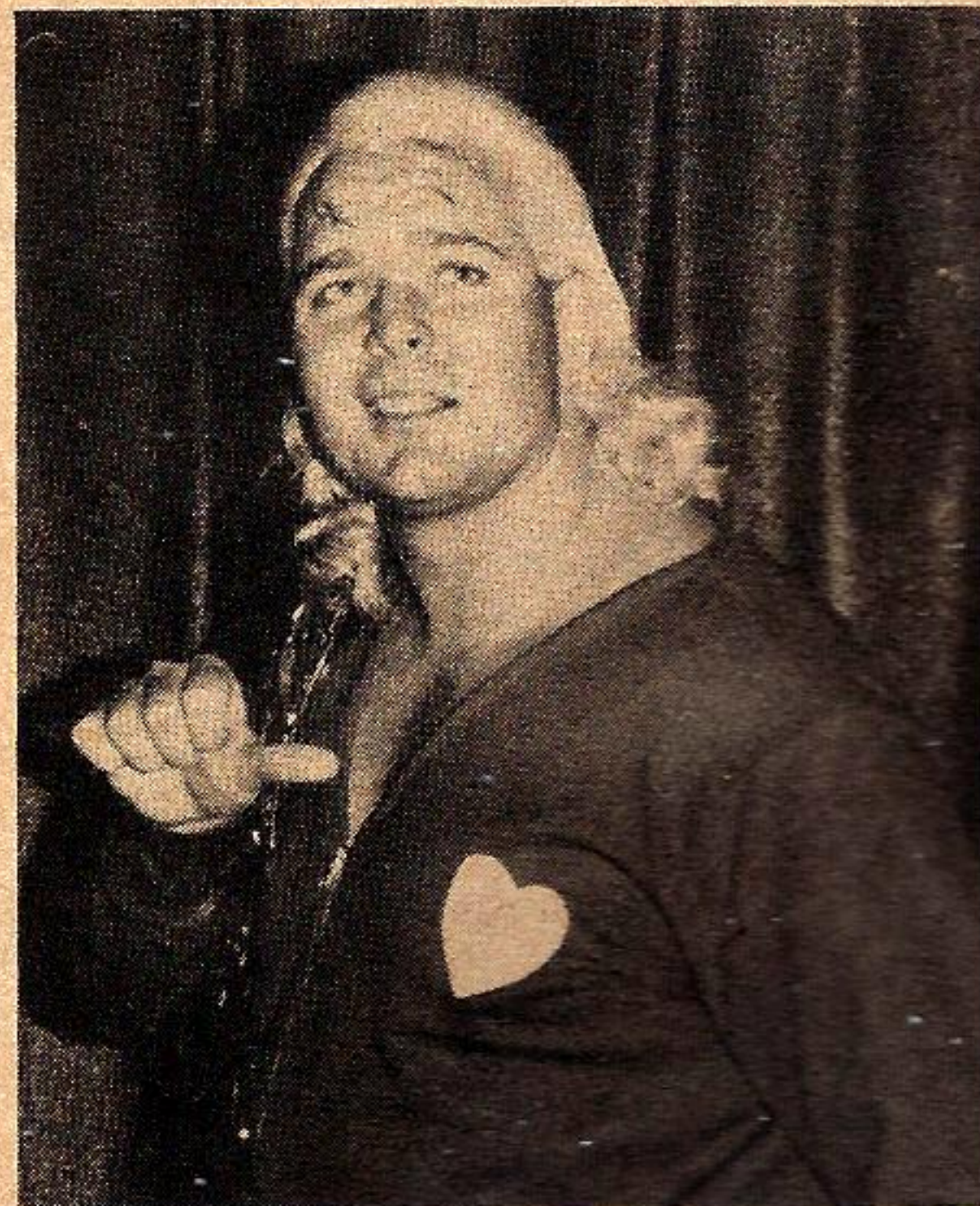
DUSTY RHODES

"Daddy, I could have become the greatest politician in history! The people dig me. They like my ideas. They like my funky talk! I could have gone all the way to the Presidency!"



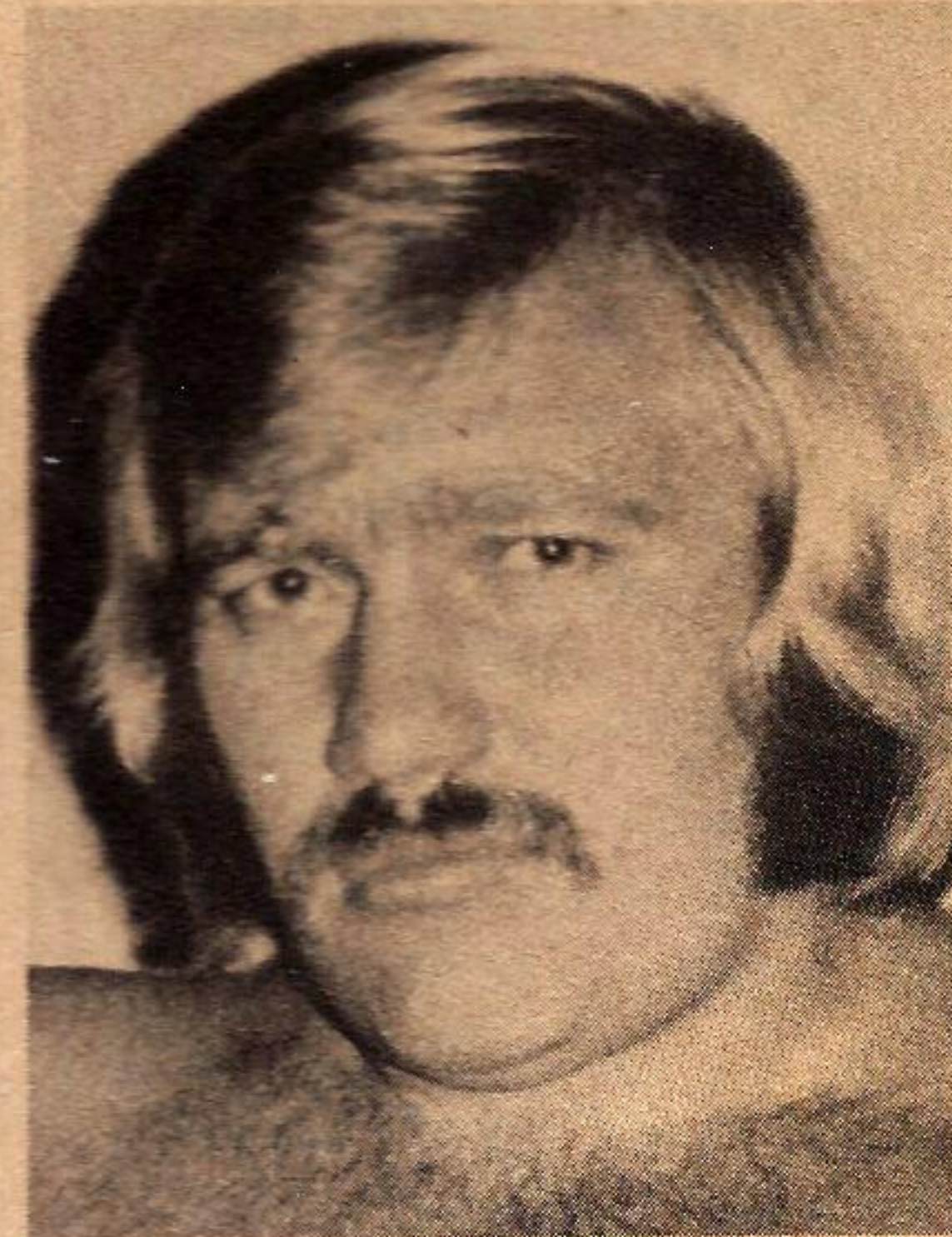
NICK BOCKWINKLE

"If I didn't become a wrestler I would have tried my hand at promoting. There is nothing I ever wanted to do outside of this sport. The wrestling field is my whole life."



JIM VALIANT

"Very few people realize that I am a first class gourmet chef. Any time I wanted, I could get a job in the classiest restaurants in the world. However, I know that wrestling needs me too much!"



JOHN STUDD

"I used to be a bouncer at a famous west coast night spot. It was a hell of a great job, bouncing people on butts when they got out of hand. If I wasn't rasslin', I'd be bouncing somewhere!"

HOTSEAT

PETER MAIVIA: "I WOULD RATHER BE RIGHT THAN CHAMPION"

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY BILL APTER

HE'S A QUIET man, yet he possesses the dignity of tribal chieftains. A native of Samoa, he left his tribe to compete in the wrestling capitals of the world. Since that day, his name has become synonymous with wrestling integrity. Despite his quiet demeanor, this man has become one of the most popular mat stars. He is Peter Maivia.

Q: Well, Peter, after all these years we've finally convinced you to be on the "Hotseat."

A: I just don't like interviews. I believe a wrestler should let his record do the talking for him. There's something about threats and bragging that's undignified.

Q: An interview doesn't have to be only threats and bragging.

A: I hope not. Still, an interview makes a man's views seem more important than they actually are. When I see myself quoted in print, I always want it to be more important than what I actually said. For something to be quoted

and read by others, it should reveal or explain something. So few interviews really get to the heart of the matter.

Q: What do you consider to be the heart of the matter?

“
“There is a thrill, a shamefully wonderful thrill, in battering a man senseless. It's an ugly delight. It scares me to know there's this streak of cruelty in me.”
”

A: I think the only real subject to discuss is my philosophy of wrestling. It's important my fans know I would rather be right than champion. When I hear men say they'd do anything to be champion, I walk away in disgust. As far as I'm concerned, the end never justifies the means. This means there's less chance of

me becoming champion than some other wrestlers.

Q: You sound like you don't want to be champion.

A: That's not true. Because something isn't the most important goal doesn't mean it isn't important at all. I'd sacrifice anything but my principles for the WWF title. It's the mark of being best in this profession. Being best is very important to me. Being best on my terms is most important of all.

Q: Have you ever been in a match when you've lost your poise and brawled?

A: Of course. I'm only human. I'm not proud of those bouts. But I learned something in them. There is a thrill, a shamefully wonderful thrill, in battering a man senseless. The feeling of power is incredible. It's an ugly delight. It scares me to know there's this streak of cruelty in me. I have to concentrate in every match to keep my temper





“
**“When I’m wrestling,
 I’m most alive. But when
 I’m in some small town
 where the buildings are
 dingy and the
 landscape is ugly, I miss
 Samoa’s beauty to the
 point where it hurts.”**
 ”

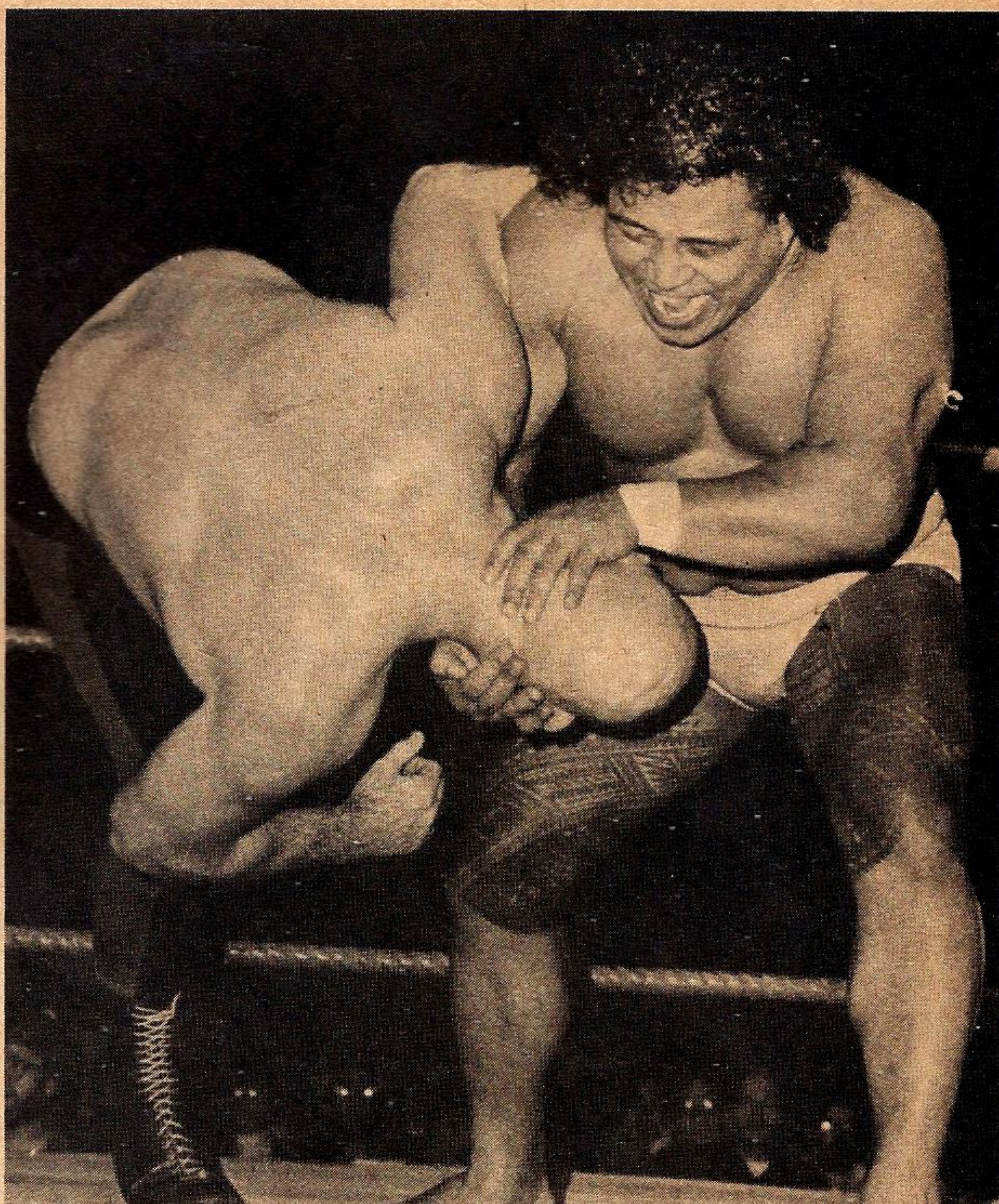
under control. But when I lose my temper, I do understand how men can be rulebreakers.

Q: Do you have any tricks to help you keep your temper in check?

A: There are no tricks. I keep myself under control by willpower. Whenever I sense myself slipping, I pull back, even if it means losing an advantage. It’s a hard, deliberate process, but it’s worth it.

Q: Do you think being a Samoan chieftain has influenced your outlook on wrestling?

A: I’d like to think my principles would be as strong no matter where or how I was brought up. However, I can’t deny my strict Samoan upbringing has been influential. We have a very strong moral code. Before civilization came, there



Maivia’s recklessness is apparent in this brawl against Baron Von Raschke. Peter’s wild look reflects his hatred of this notorious grappler whom he sends crashing to the canvas late in their battle.

were almost no fights at all. Hatred and jealousy were unknown. I’m the product of generations of human decency. I had to be influenced by that. And I’m very proud of it.

Q: That’s obvious. Your body is covered with native tattoos.

A: It’s my way of declaring my heritage. I am Samoan. The tattoos say that for me.

Q: Why did you leave Samoa?

A: It was something I had to do. I learned to wrestle on the island. The sport made me feel like a god. It is what my mind and body are supposed to do. To get the most out of wrestling, which means to get the most out of my life, I had

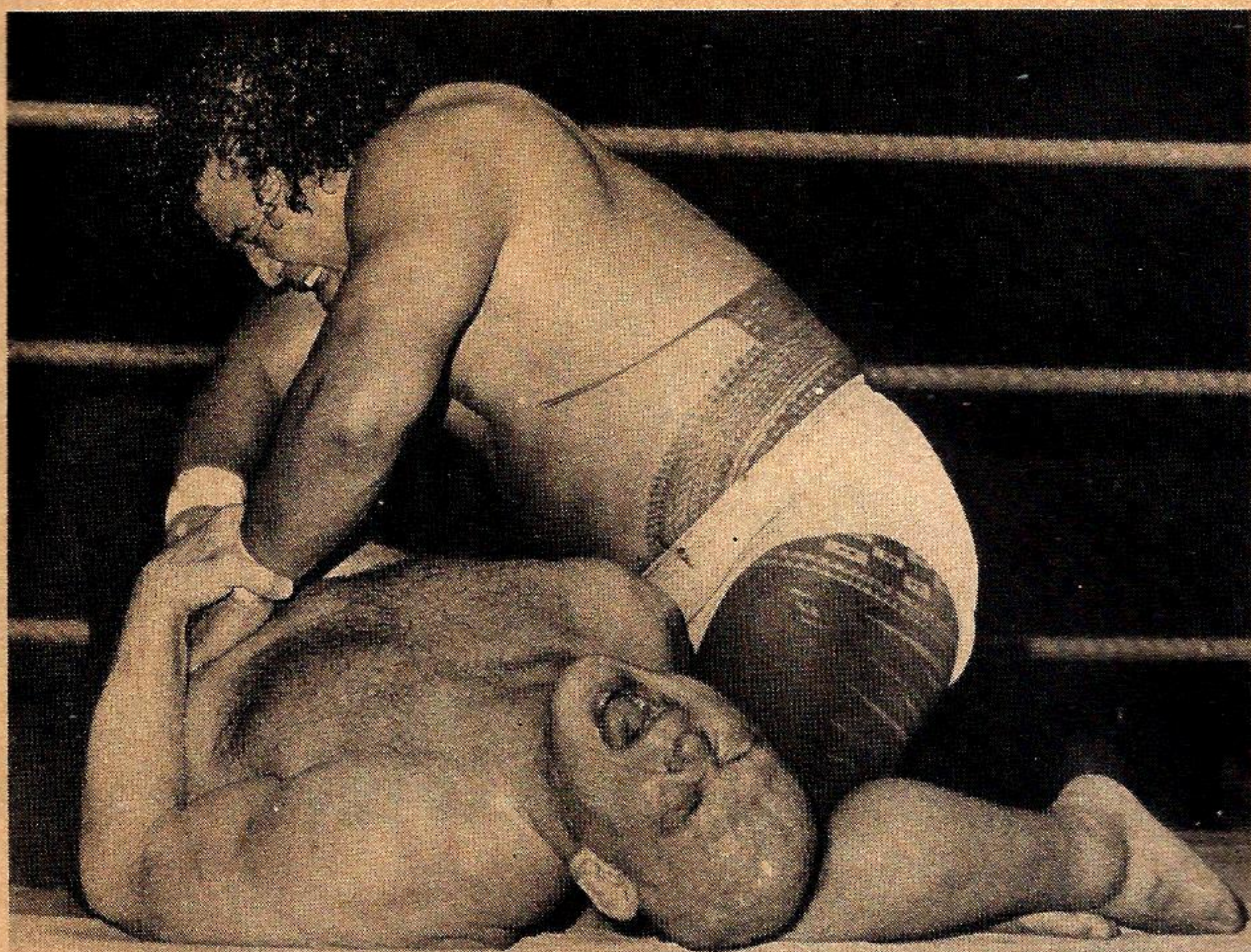
to wrestle the best. That meant becoming a professional wrestler. It also meant leaving Samoa. I couldn’t deny my destiny. I left.

Q: Have you ever regretted the decision?

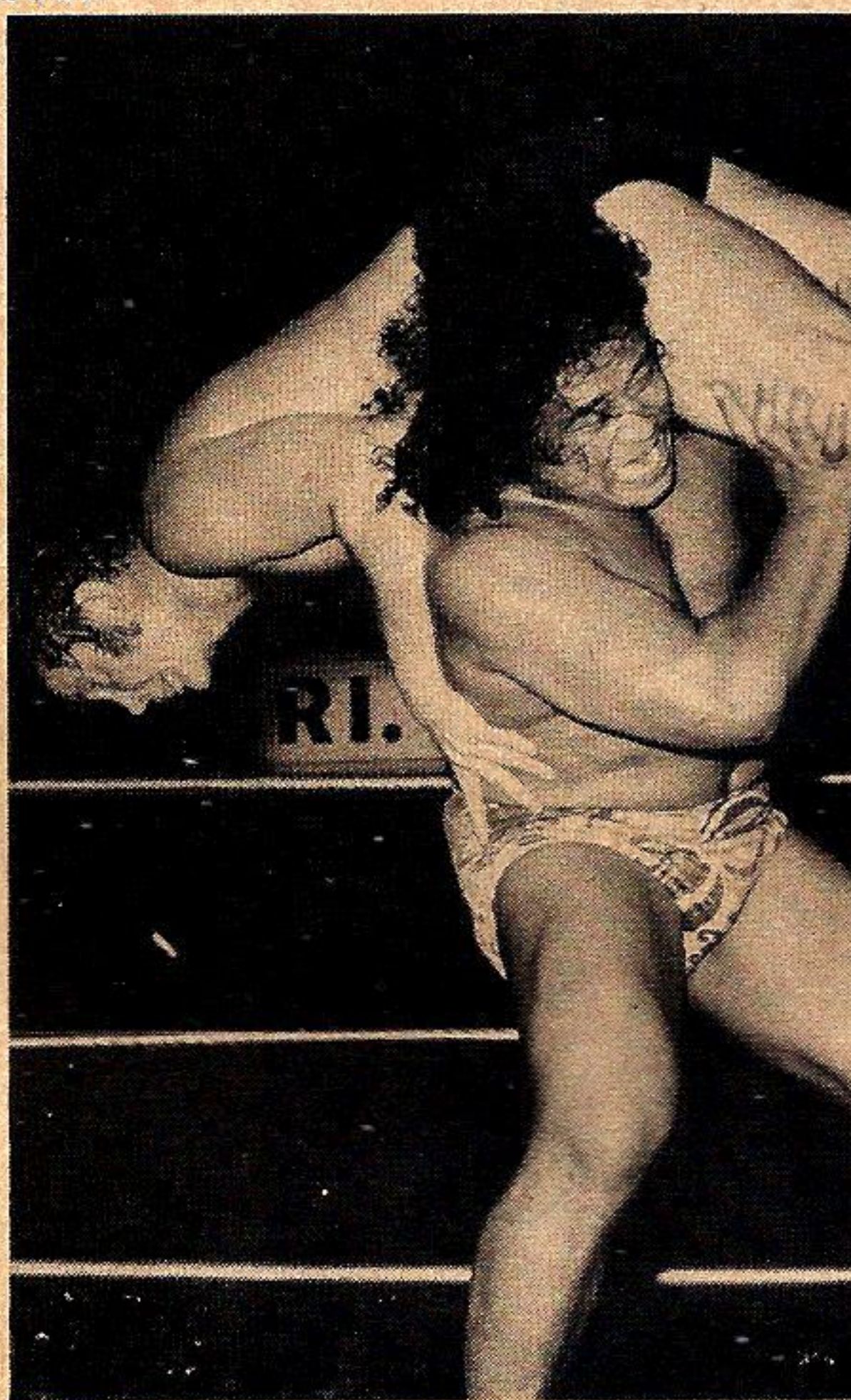
A: Not when I’m wrestling. That’s when I’m most alive. But when I’m in some small town where buildings are dingy and landscape is ugly, I miss Samoa’s beauty to the point where it hurts. I return to my homeland every chance I get.

Q: Do you think your background had anything to do with your modesty?

A: I suppose so. Samoans are a very modest, quiet people.



Above: Maivia torments Von Raschke with a nerve hold on the belly. Below: Dory Funk Jr. goes flying across the ring when Peter executes a perfect flip during their bout.



thing, the highest achievement in the sport. To have Graham own it is like having a mad chieftain at the head of your tribe. A mad chieftain has to be removed at all costs. Graham will put my principles to their toughest test. What is one man's dignity compared to the dignity of a whole sport? There's no real answer

But more than my heritage, bragging is something that sickens me. Threats are for bullies. I believe in stating the truth as simply and quietly as possible. Being an athlete is holy to me. I wouldn't cheapen it for anything.

Q: Do you think Superstar Billy Graham cheapens the WWWF title?

A: Graham is a blight. He's unscrupulous, undignified, and unacceptable. Anyone who loves the sport is willing to do anything to see him become ex-champion.

Q: Anything?

A: Against Graham, I would constantly have to keep my temper in control. The man makes me so angry, there's no telling what I might do against him. There's a chance I could cripple him. Just talking about him fills me with rage! It would be a pleasure to feel Superstar Billy Graham writhe in agony under my power. And if I did lose control, I'm not quite sure I'd feel bad afterwards.

Q: The wild look in your eyes is terrifying.

A: I'm sorry. Graham does this to me. A title is a wonderful



“

“Graham makes me so angry, there's no telling what I might do to him. There's a chance I could cripple him. Just talking about him fills me with rage.”

”

to that question. I hope I make the right choice when I face Graham. I probably won't know what I'll do until the match starts.

Q: Is that the best way to wrestle for the title?

A: It's the worst way. But it's the only way as far as I'm concerned. I want to maintain my principles. Yet I also want Graham defeated. Whatever happens, my decision will be with me the rest of my life. The heat of battle will show me what I really am.

Q: It promises to be an exciting match.

A: The most important of my life.

Q: Well, best of luck. Thanks for the interview. We hope it wasn't too painful.

A: I said what I felt needed to be said. Thank you for the opportunity. □

HERE IS W FAN OF TH

GUEST JUDGE: LARRY ZBYSZKO

IT'S BEEN AN honor for me to read the hundreds of essays sent to this magazine. I feel like this is being written to friends. As far as I'm concerned, you're all winners.

But one has to be chosen above all others. And that one is Cathi Stice, a most remarkable woman. Her essay was one of the most moving things I've ever read. It made me proud to be part of wrestling.

Cathi is also proud of being part of wrestling. As a fan, she appreciates the many differences the sport contains. Her essay starts out by praising wrestlers, athletes working hard to master their sport. She realizes it's a constant struggle, a passion that consumes all of a person's time. The sport must be the most important thing in a wrestler's life. Even his family has to understand that.

However, Cathi takes it one step further. She sees wrestlers setting an example for others. Dedication leads to success in anything. If I can make someone realize the reward is worth a struggle, then I'll have made people better for my being around. That's about all a man can hope for.

Still, Cathi isn't finished. After explaining the relationship of wrestlers to fans, she then explores what the fans mean to each other. And what she finds makes for very interesting reading. Wrestling fans



A wrestler must work at his profession 24 hours a day, seven days a week, year in and year out. Every day, ordinary people like myself, male and female, can learn from these professionals. Maybe I won't have the fame and fortune of a champion wrestler, but by applying that same type of dedication, we can have the same amount of pride in ourselves that they have, knowing we have done our very best.

The wrestler, however, is only part of the sport. The fans are equally important. As in

any sport, without the fans wrestling could not exist. Wrestling fans, though, are unlike any others. In a wrestling arena, there are no separate cheering sections. Two fans may root for opposing wrestlers, but when the match is over, they'll buy each other a Coke. The consideration of fan for fan is fantastic. Words can't describe that feeling, but it does make me very proud to be part of those fans.

CATHI STICE
Tampa, Florida

WRESTLING'S FAN OF THE MONTH

are interested most in the sport, not the individuals who make it up. And no matter who they favor, the fans are always friendly and decent. That's what makes them so special. And that's why they should be honored by this competition.

Cathi combines all three elements of wrestling into one unified picture. Reading it makes one understand why fans go to the arenas. One can understand why they remain so loyal. It's the best crowd of people to join.

A few years ago, Lou Albano approached me. The manager promised to make me WWWF champion if I became a rulebreaker. I laughed in his face. Albano can probably make me champion. The man is evil, but he's a genius. Still, there's some things more important than a title. Joining Albano would mean forsaking the fans.

Sometimes, late at night, I wonder what it would have been like if Albano's offer had been accepted. Imagining myself as champion is a lot of fun. Being champion would be much more fun.

Now that I've read your essays, I know being Albano's champ wouldn't be fun at all. Having the wonderful fans against you would be worse than any torture. The title would be meaningless without the crowd cheering for me.

Thank you for letting me read your essays. It made me feel a lot better about who I am and what I'm doing. □

HOW YOU CAN BECOME WRESTLING'S FAN OF THE MONTH

If you think you deserve this honor, simply send us a photo of yourself and a 100-word essay telling why you're the best fan. This can take any form from straight narrative to a poem. Photos cannot be returned.

The entries will be judged by our staff and a different wrestling star each month. The grappler will also tell why he voted the way he did, which may be the most revealing article about a wrestler you'll ever read.

Remember, the contest is called "Wrestling Fan of the Month," not "A Wrestler's Fan of the Month." This contest is intended to honor a sport, not a particular participant.

So while we admire those who work long and selflessly on their favorite wrestler's fan magazine, that's not a qualification in this contest. Fan club workers are rightfully honored elsewhere.

Without the fan, wrestling would wither and die. Because of the fans, wrestling has become the most popular sport in the world. It's about time the fans receive the recognition they deserve.

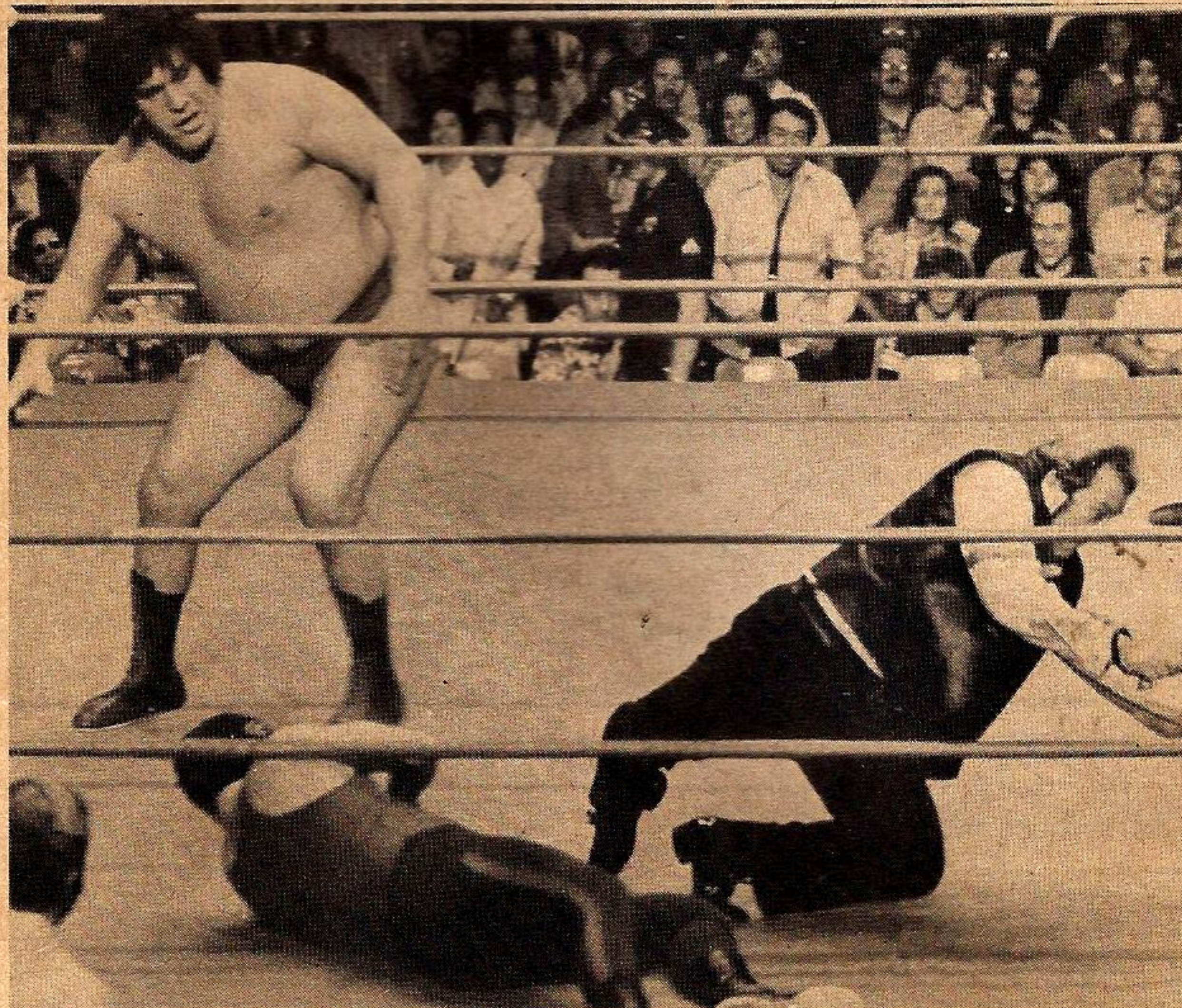
As soon as possible, send your photos and essays to:

TOP FAN CONTEST
c/o INSIDE WRESTLING
Box 38
Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571

The story you are reading now is printed at great risk to the staff of this magazine and Andre the Giant. Only our obligation to the fans is important enough for us to buck the most dangerous clique in sports

THE ANDRE THE G ONLY WE DARE PRINT

Andre batters J.C. Dykes to the canvas when the manager tries to interfere in a match between the giant and Inferno #1. Dykes would love to have Andre in his power for even a single match.



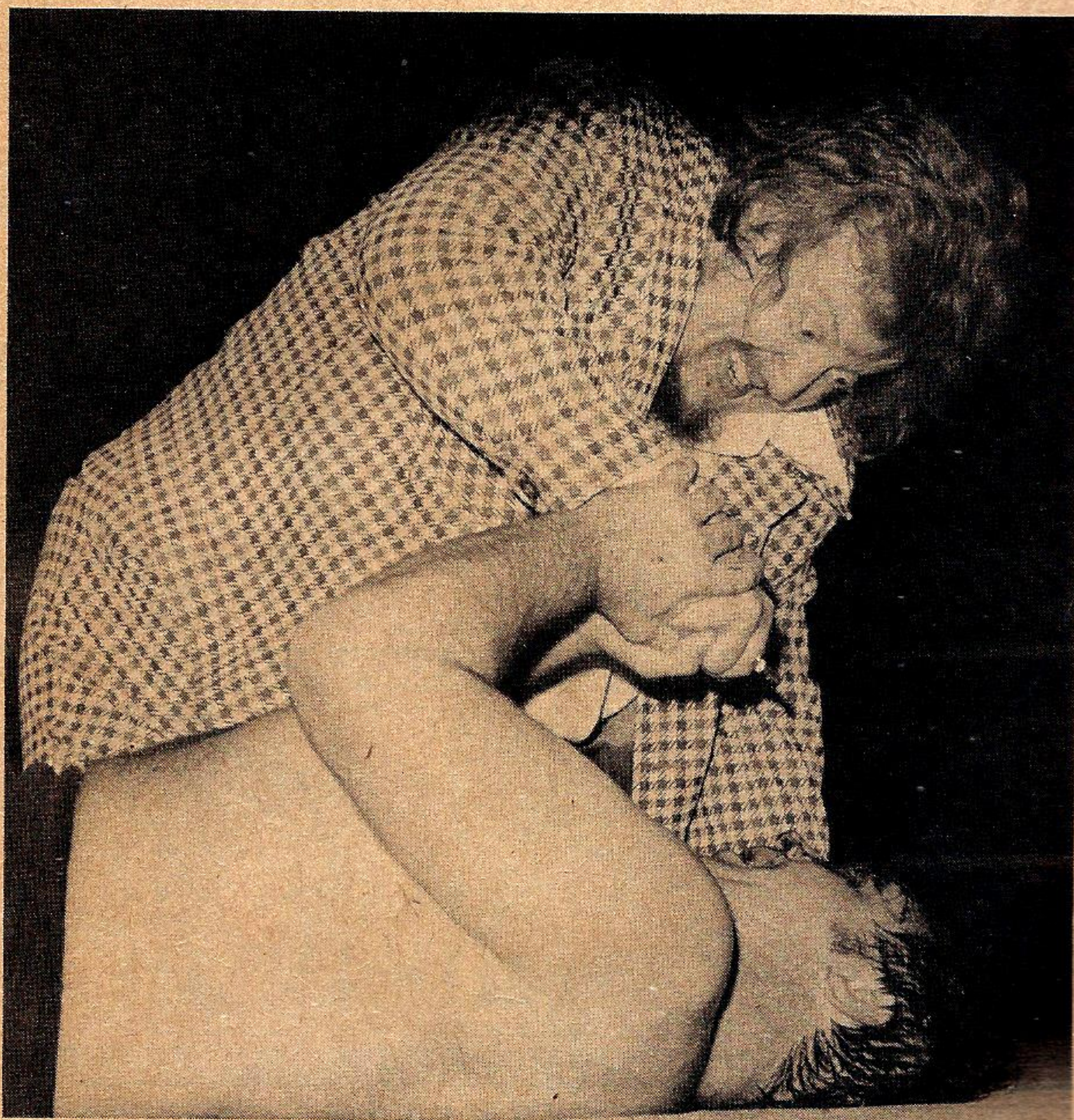
IT WAS THE most elaborate plot in wrestling history. More than \$10 million was raised by managers all over the world. Only Andre the Giant's honor prevented them from owning the sport lock, stock, and barrel.

More than 20 managers have threatened us if this story ever sees print. Even Andre suggested it might be too dangerous for us to cross this cabal of corruption. But if Andre had the courage to defeat these men, then we can respect how he did it.

A few of the guilty are Lou Albano, Gary Hart, Sir Oliver Humperdink, and Bobby Heenan. These four were the prime movers behind the plot. Each one has also called our offices, promising hell and damnation if their despicable activities are ever revealed.

These men went to almost every wrestling manager in the word with their plan. It was simple but expensive: buy Andre

GIANT STORY



Sir Oliver Humperdink jabs a pen into the already bloody wound of Louis Tillet. The unscrupulous manager would be the most deadly man alive if he had Andre in his stable, ready to destroy any decent wrestler.

the Giant' contract for \$10 million. That would place him under their control. Whenever these managers wanted some decent wrestler maimed, they'd have Andre at their beck and call. As slave to these managers, Andre would have to do their bidding.

The managers leaped at the plan. Not only would Andre make life easy for their established stable of wrestlers, but he couldn't threaten them, either.

They'd all be one big happy family—except for Andre. And no one cared how Andre felt, anyway.

With \$10 million behind them, the five men approached the promoters who currently have contracted Andre's matches. Some sold out right away for the 200% profit Albano promised them. Others hesitated, afraid of what havoc these managers intended to wreak. These men had their consciences quieted by

profits of 250-275%. Only one man held out, not selling at any price. That man is now in the hospital with two broken legs.

With Andre legally in their power, Albano and Heenan informed the giant of his situation. "You can't even eat a hot dog without our permission. You'll also give us the first bite. Now listen to what your life is going to be."

"No!" Andre shouted. "You listen! You've spent a lot of money for nothing. If I have to be your boy, I'll quit wrestling. That's not a threat but a promise! You've bought my time but not my soul."

"We'll take you to court!" Heenan screamed. "We'll get the best lawyers in the world to stomp you into the ground! You'll spend the rest of your life a penniless bum."

"That's better than being your slave!" Andre shouted back. "It will take five years in the courts to settle this thing. That should give me time to wipe out every one of your wrestlers. And if you have me banned immediately, then I'll find some other line of work. But I'll be dead before I wrestle for you."

Albano and Heenan went into a huddle. Without saying another word to Andre, they walked out. Two days later, Andre's contracts were in the hands of the original promoters. No one is willing to say how much money the managers lost, if any. No one is willing to say much of anything about the whole incident.

We are not at liberty to reveal

(Continued on page 52)

INSIDE WRESTLING'S OFFICIAL RATINGS

These Ratings Are Compiled With The Assistance Of Top Wrestlers, Promoters,
And Reporters. They Are Universally Accepted As Official

World Wide Wrestling Federation



Champion: SUPER-
STAR GRAHAM



1—DUSTY RHODES

American Wrestling Association



Champion: NICK
BOCKWINKLE



1—RAY STEVENS

National Wrestling Alliance



Champion: HARLEY
RACE



1—DUSTY RHODES

Most Popular Wrestlers



1—DUSTY RHODES



2—ANDRE THE
GIANT

Tag Teams



1—IVAN KOLOFF

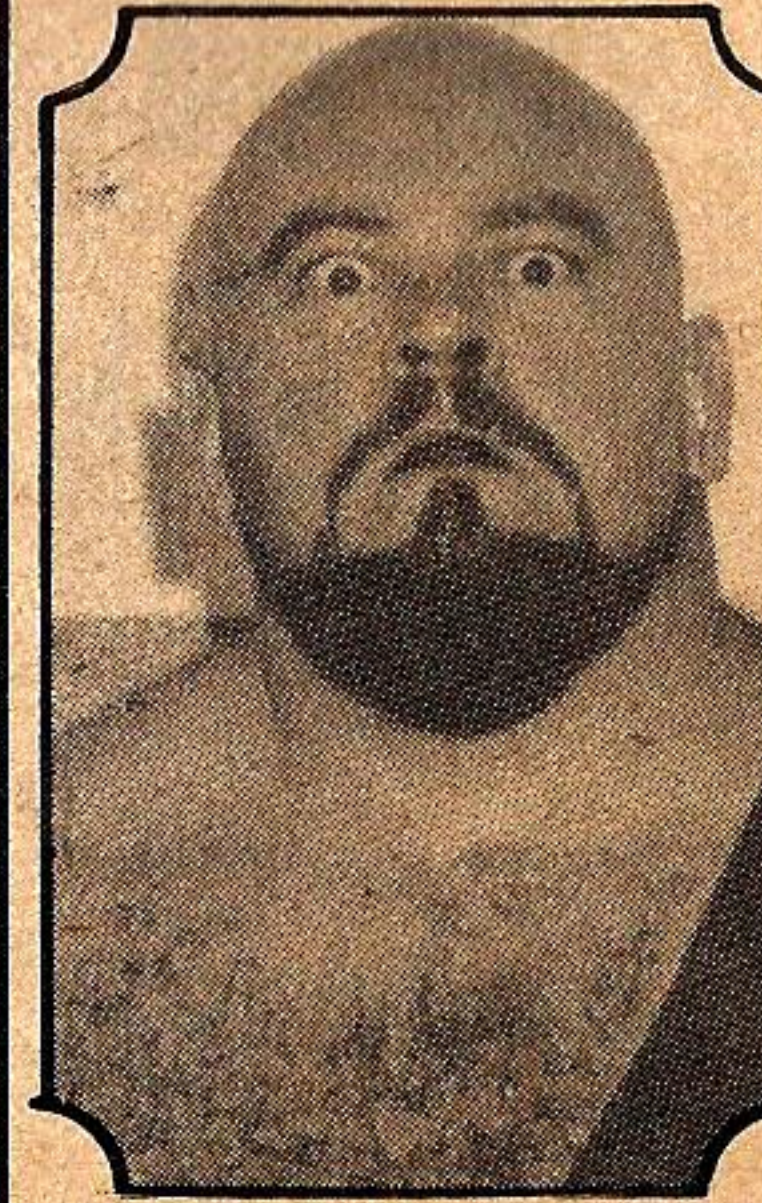


1—THE ANDERSON
BROTHERS

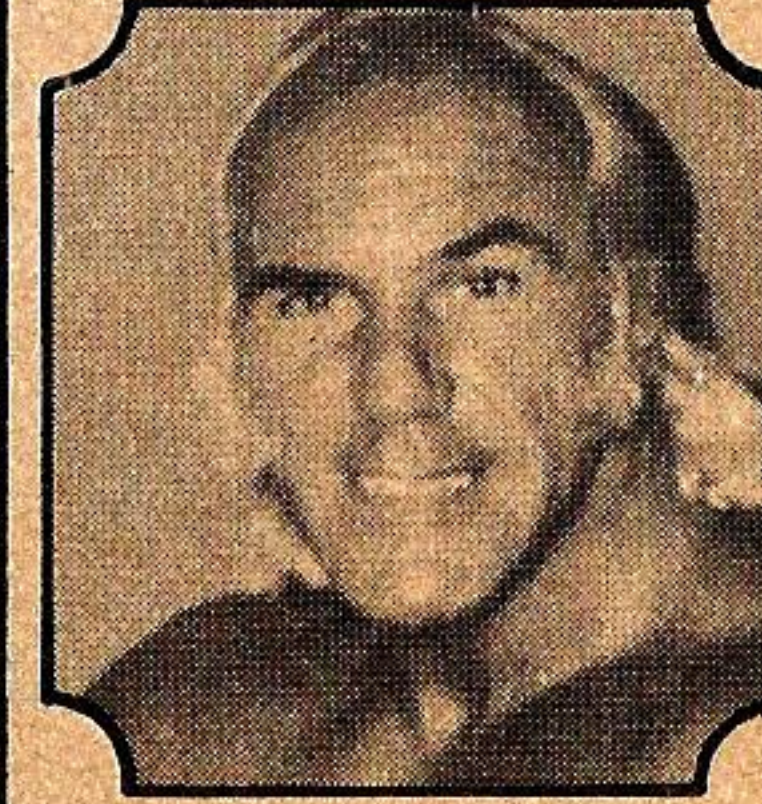


2—SUPERSTAR
GRAHAM

Most Hated Wrestlers



1—IVAN KOLOFF



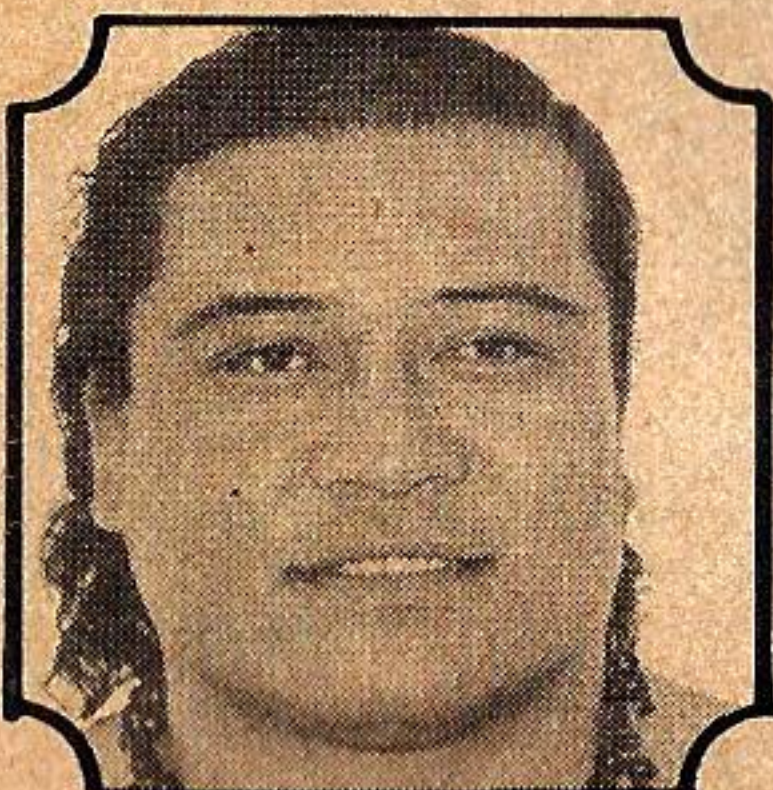
2—SUPERSTAR
GRAHAM



2—BOB BACKLUND



3—MIL MASCARAS

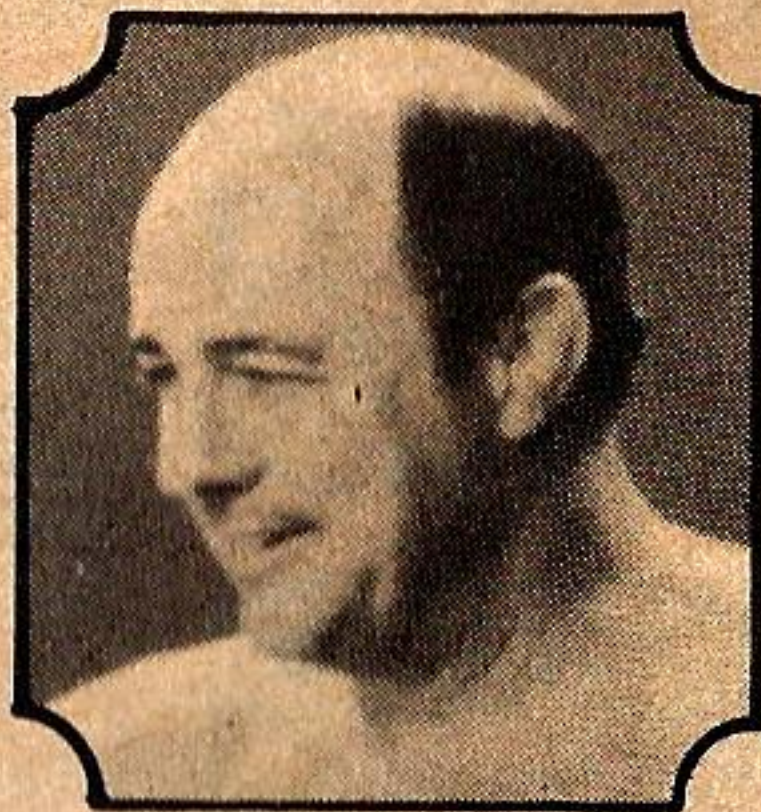


4—PETER MAIVIA

5—IVAN PUTSKI
6—KEN PATERA
7—CHIEF JAY
STRONGBOW
8—GEORGE STEELE
9—TONY GAREA
10—LARRY ZBYSZKO



2—BILLY ROBINSON

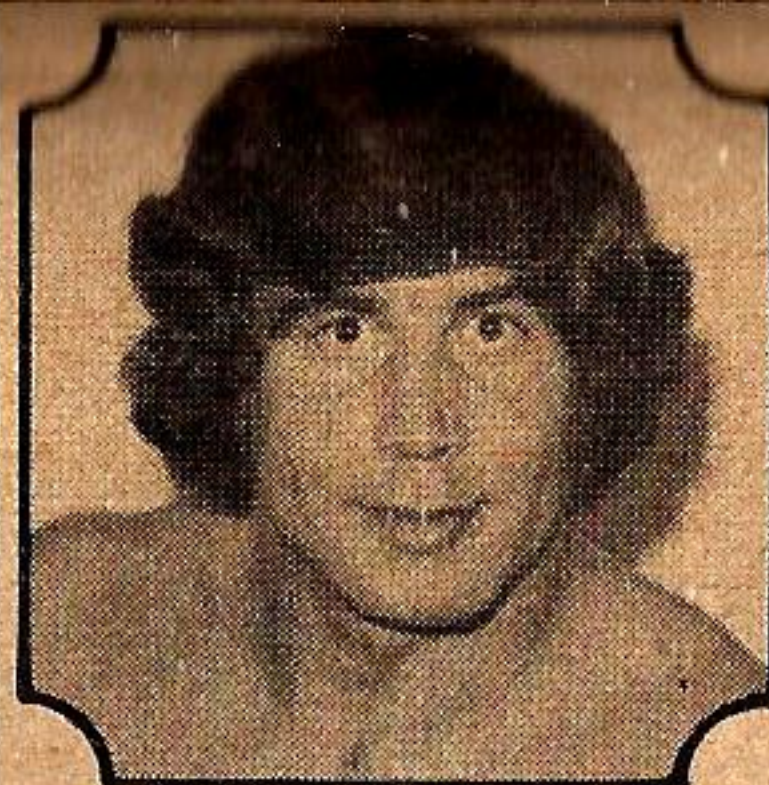


3—VERNE GAGNE

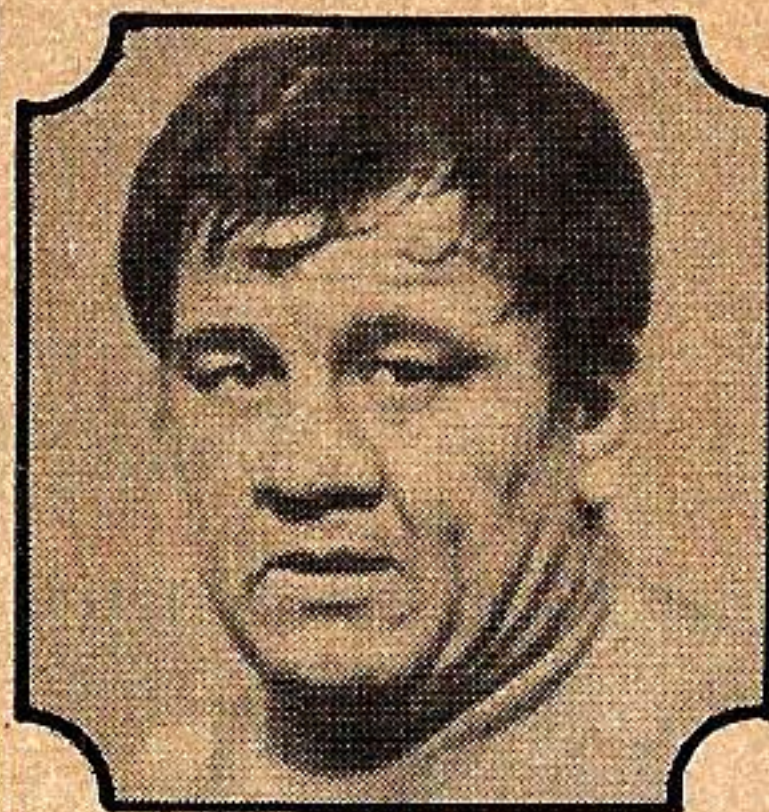


4—LARRY HENNIG

5—GREG GAGNE
6—BOBBY DUNCUM
7—BLACKJACK
LANZA
8—JIM BRUNZELL
9—SUPER
DESTROYER
10—ANGELO MOSCA



2—JACK BRISCO



3—WAHOO
McDANIEL



4—TERRY FUNK

5—ROCKY
JOHNSON
6—DORY FUNK JR.
7—PAUL JONES
8—DICK SLATER
9—PAT PATTERSON
10—JIMMY SNUKA



3—BOB BACKLUND



4—MIL MASCARAS



5—IVAN PUTSKI

6—PAUL JONES
7—DINO BRAVO
8—JACK BRISCO
9—MR. WRESTLING
II
10—TONY GAREA



2—MR. FUJI &
PROFESSOR TANAKA



3—GREG GAGNE &
JIM BRUNZELL

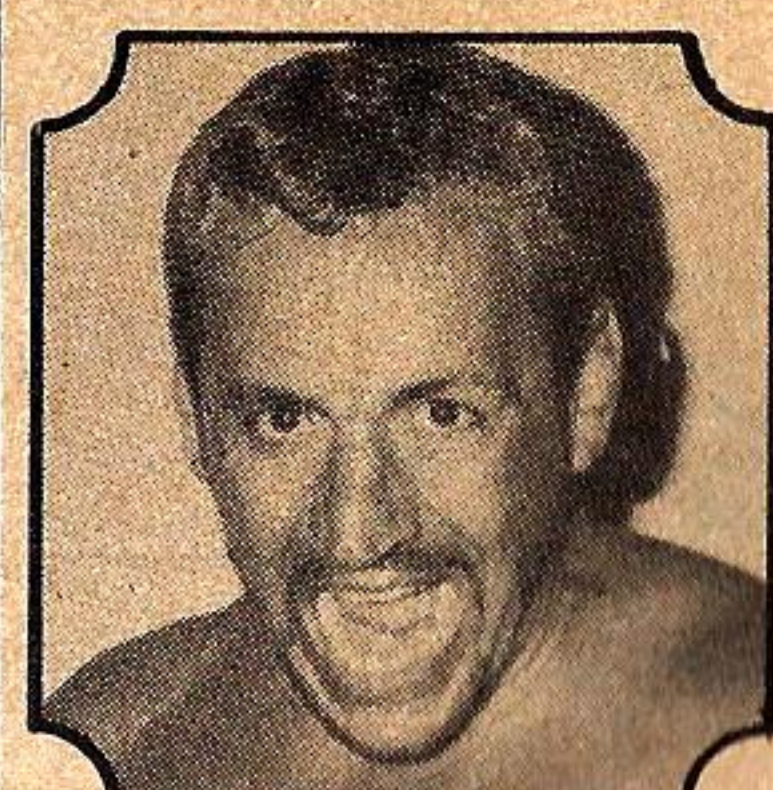
4—PAUL JONES &
RICK STEAMBOAT
5—PAT PATTERSON
& IVAN KOLOFF
6—BOBBY DUNCUM
& BLACKJACK LANZA
7—RIC FLAIR &
GREG VALENTINE
8—JACK & JERRY
BRISCO
9—THE VALIANT
BROTHERS
10—BRUISER &
CRUSHER



3—ERNIE LADD

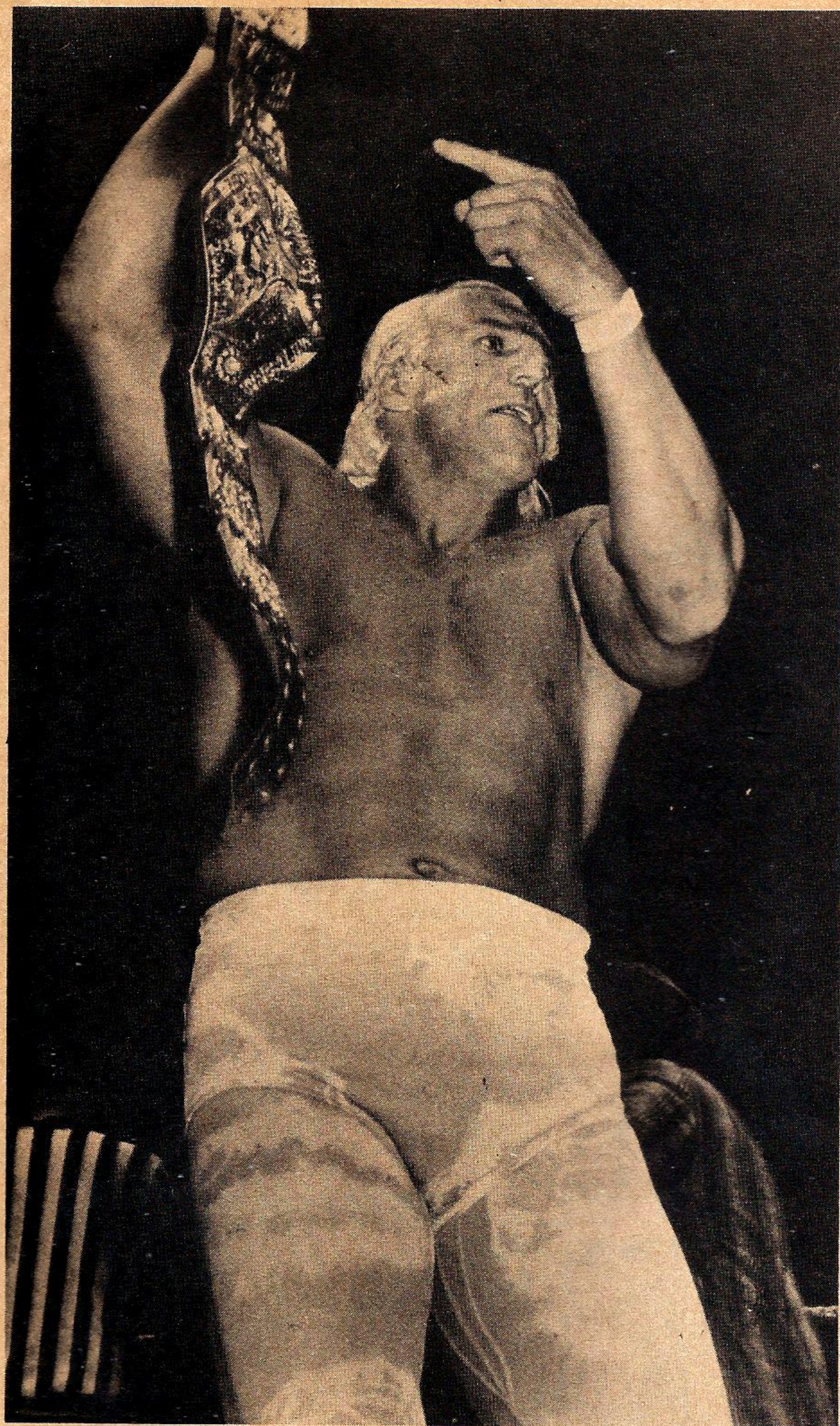


4—RIC FLAIR



5—THE SHEIK

6—BLACKJACK
MULLIGAN
7—DICK SLATER
8—GEORGE STEELE
9—KEN PATERA
10—STAN HANSEN



I VAN PUTSKI RUSHED quickly away from the arena. He wanted to be seen by no one, and he did not want to see anyone. Ivan knew he was better off with as little human contact as possible. With his temper in such a volatile state, he could hurt someone—real bad.

He kept hearing it over and over in his mind. "Ivan Putski . . . you blew it!" Putski would never be able to forget those five words. He would never be able to forget the ridicule and contempt behind each syllable. But worst of all, he would not forget the implications: Ivan's chances for winning the WWWF title were now all but shattered.

It wasn't supposed to be this way at all. This was supposed to be Putski's night of glory. He had planned on celebrating through the night. He was convinced he was going to take the WWWF belt from Superstar Billy Graham. He had perfected his strategies. He was sure he knew exactly what would be effective against the champion. Of course, he had been making these plans for months in anticipation of a

**Superstar
Graham's
Ugly
Taunt:**

**"IVAN PUTS
YOU BLEW IT"**

The chance of a lifetime finally came for Ivan Putski. When it was over, and his dreams lay in ruins about him, all he could hear was the mocking laughter of his conqueror, Superstar Billy Graham

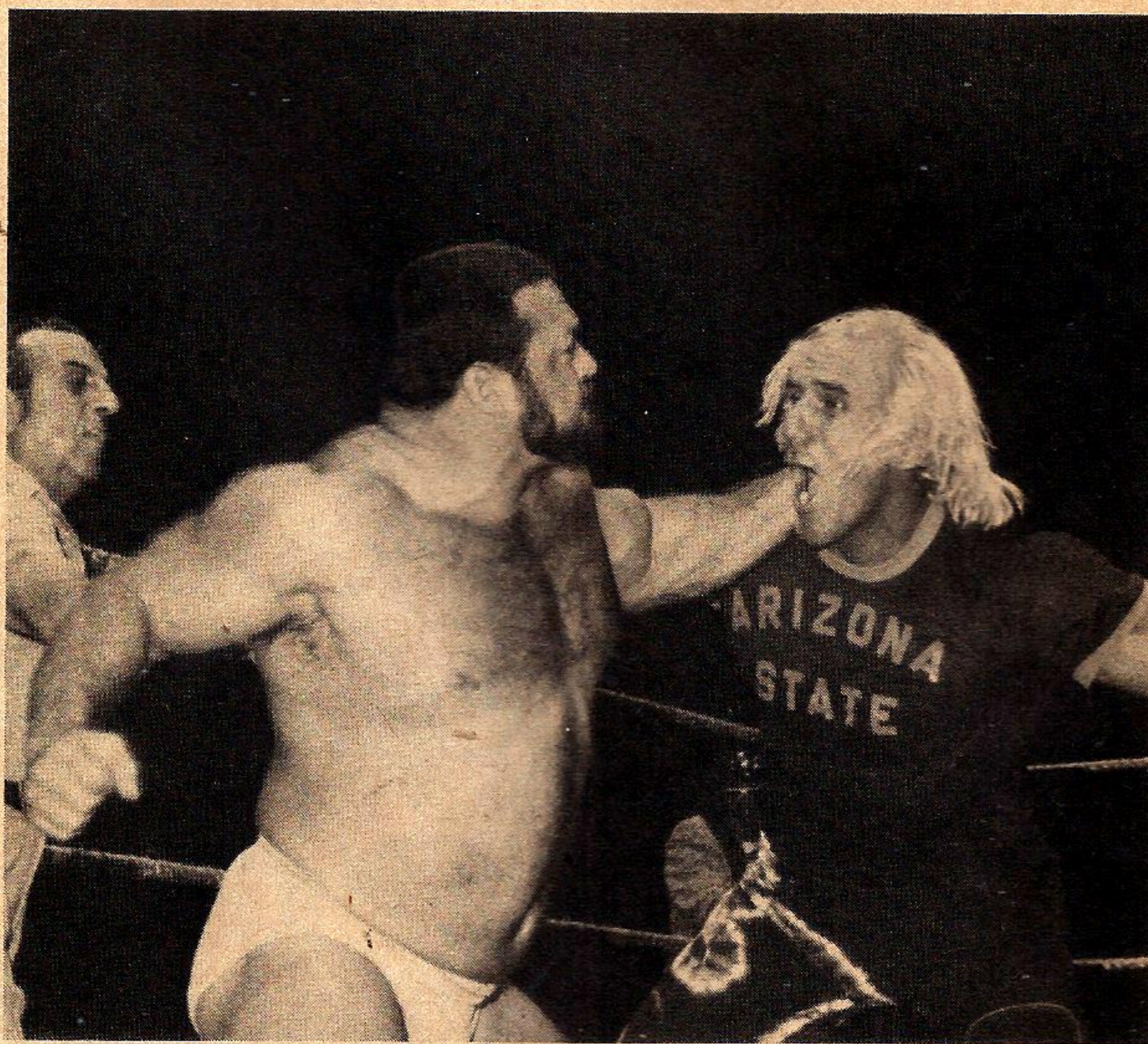
PHOTOS BY BILL APTER

title shot. And when it came, Putski thought himself ready.

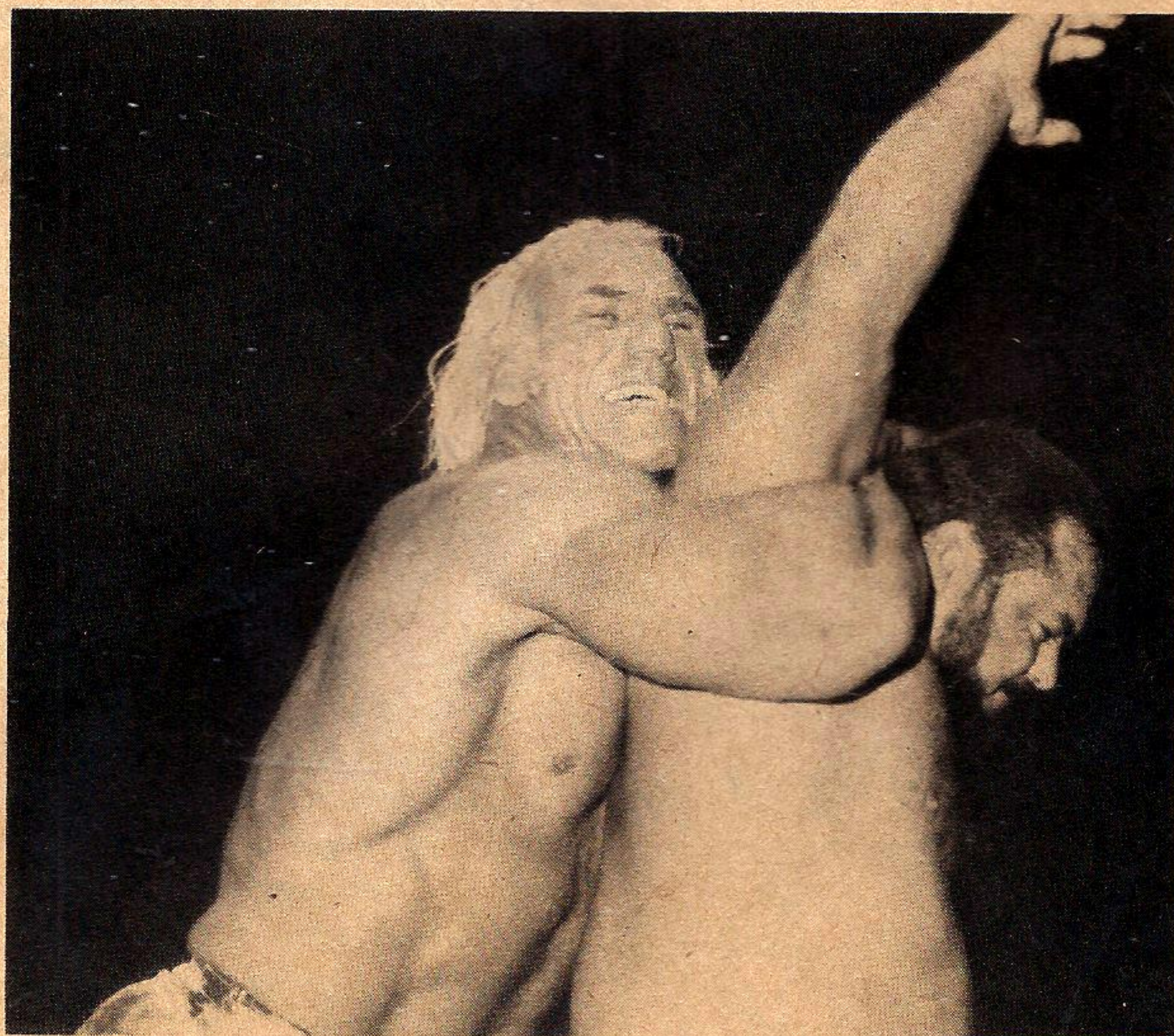
Of course, Superstar Graham knew exactly what was going down. He knew Putski had been studying his style. Graham presupposed that Ivan had worked out several strategies to use against his foe. Therefore, it was up to Graham to keep coming up with new methods to thwart Ivan. And each time they met, Putski was getting further from the title instead of closer. Graham had given Ivan more than enough title matches. Of course, Billy had managed to have himself disqualified in several of them, and had thus avoided losing his championship.

Finally, Graham decided he would wrestle Putski only one more time. "This is his final chance," the WWWF champion

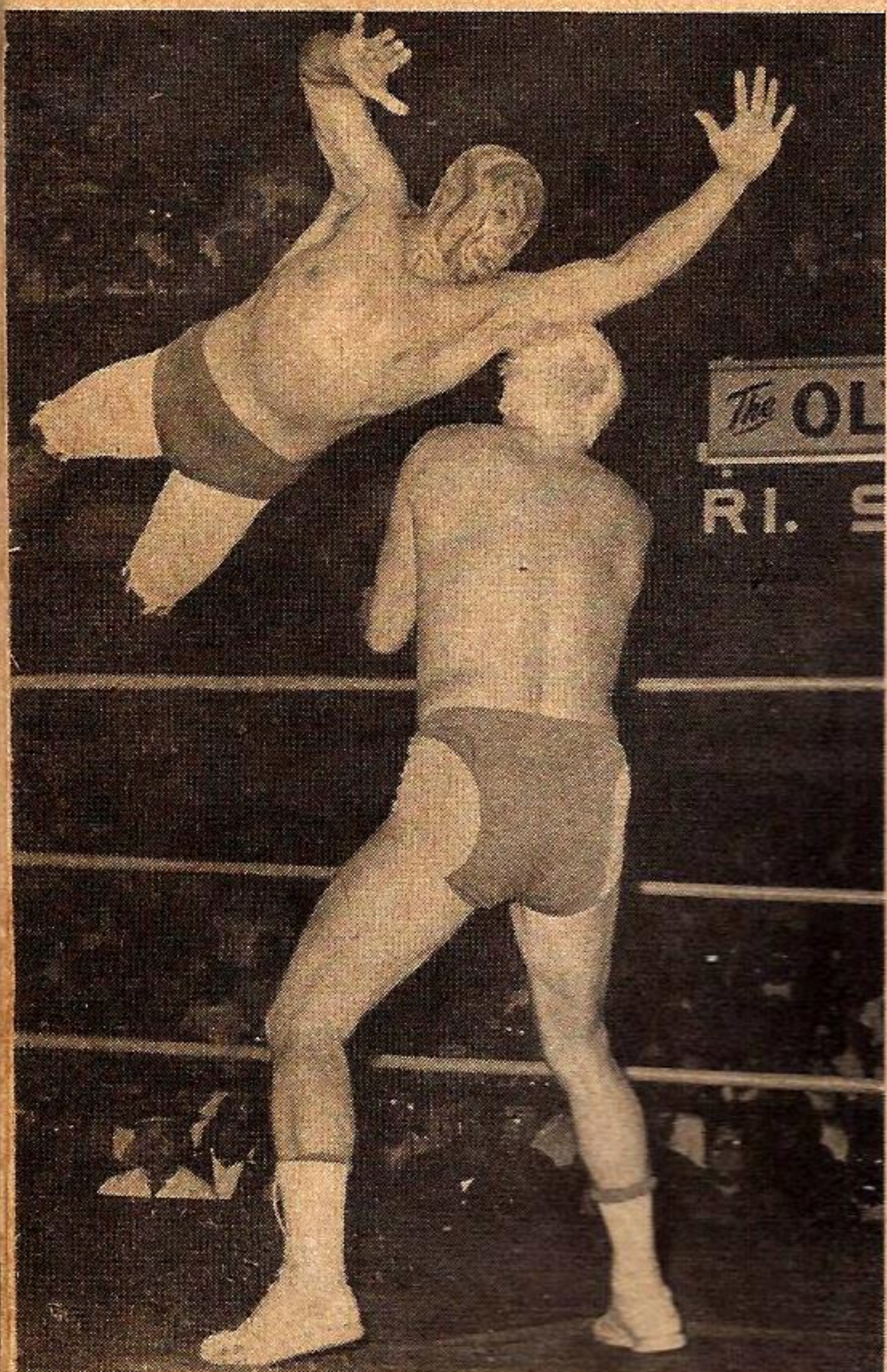
(Continued on page 54)



Above: Before the match even begins, Ivan goes after Graham with a roundhouse right. Left: Putski and the referee argue over who is the rightful owner of the WWWF title belt. Below: Graham grins as he captures Putski in a agonizing full-nelson late in the confrontation.



**KI...
!!!"**



THERE HAS BEEN a change, and no one is quite sure what to make of it. Many people are very worried. Could this be the end of Mil Mascaras' wrestling career? Is it all over for the mat star? Hopefully not. Yet a close examination is definitely called for in this situation.

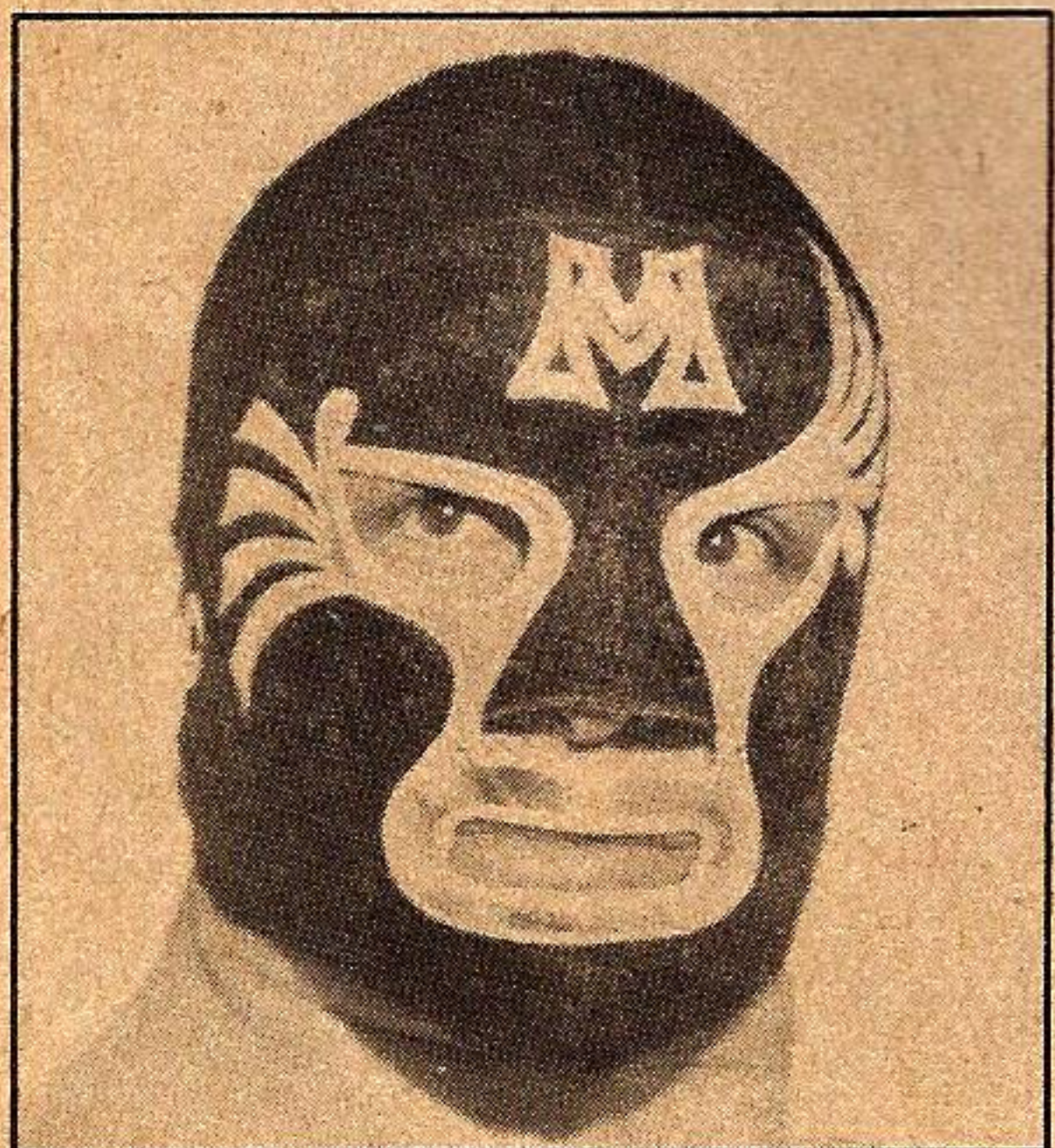
What has happened to Mascaras? His style in recent matches seems to have changed completely. Those great flying tactics for which he is so famous have almost disappeared. Why? For what reason has this high-

Not only will Mil Mascaras be able to do his flying tactics, he is now experimenting with non-aerial moves that will make the man even greater!

staying on the canvas, relying heavily on his strength to win battles. There is no question that Mascaras is a very strong man. But he is using maneuvers now that he never used before.

When Mil Mascaras wrestles—usually—spectators witness a fabulous array of aerial maneuvers, dazzling in their complexity. After all, Mil Mascaras does a flying bodypress unlike any other man in the entire sport. The amazing grace the man possesses is phenomenal. No one else can

WHAT CAUSED THE SHOCKING CHANGE IN MIL MASCARAS?



flying mat star suddenly become grounded? And what kind of effect will this have on Mascaras? Is this the beginning of the end?

In short, what has caused this change, and how long will it last?

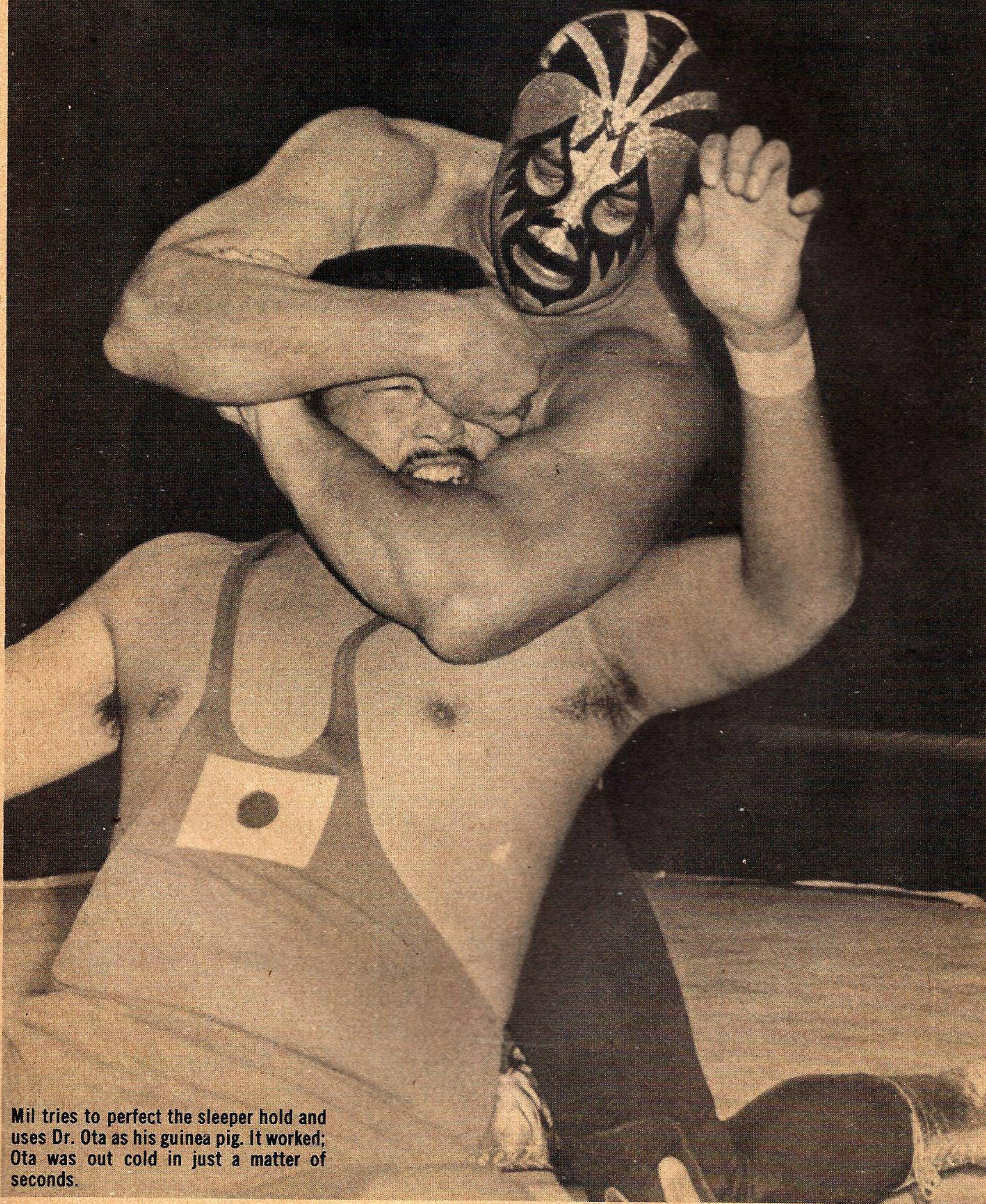
An examination must first be made of the way Mil is wrestling now. Where once he spent at least 40 percent of his time executing complex flying maneuvers, he now spends less time on such tactics. He is

compare. It is his flying which made him great. Why should he suddenly abandon it?

When viewing Mil using his new style, one is still awed by the man. Watching Mascaras in action has always been a thrill, no matter what kind of maneuvers he used. Yet this is different. Mascaras seems to be purposely ignoring any kind of tactic which will take him off his feet, even for a second. He

(Continued on page 58)

What made Mil Mascaras limit the flying tactics that made him a legend? The answer to this shocking puzzle may change the future of wrestling as we know it. Most certainly, Mascaras will never be the same



Mil tries to perfect the sleeper hold and uses Dr. Ota as his guinea pig. It worked; Ota was out cold in just a matter of seconds.

A PERSONAL THANK YOU FROM BOB BACKLUND

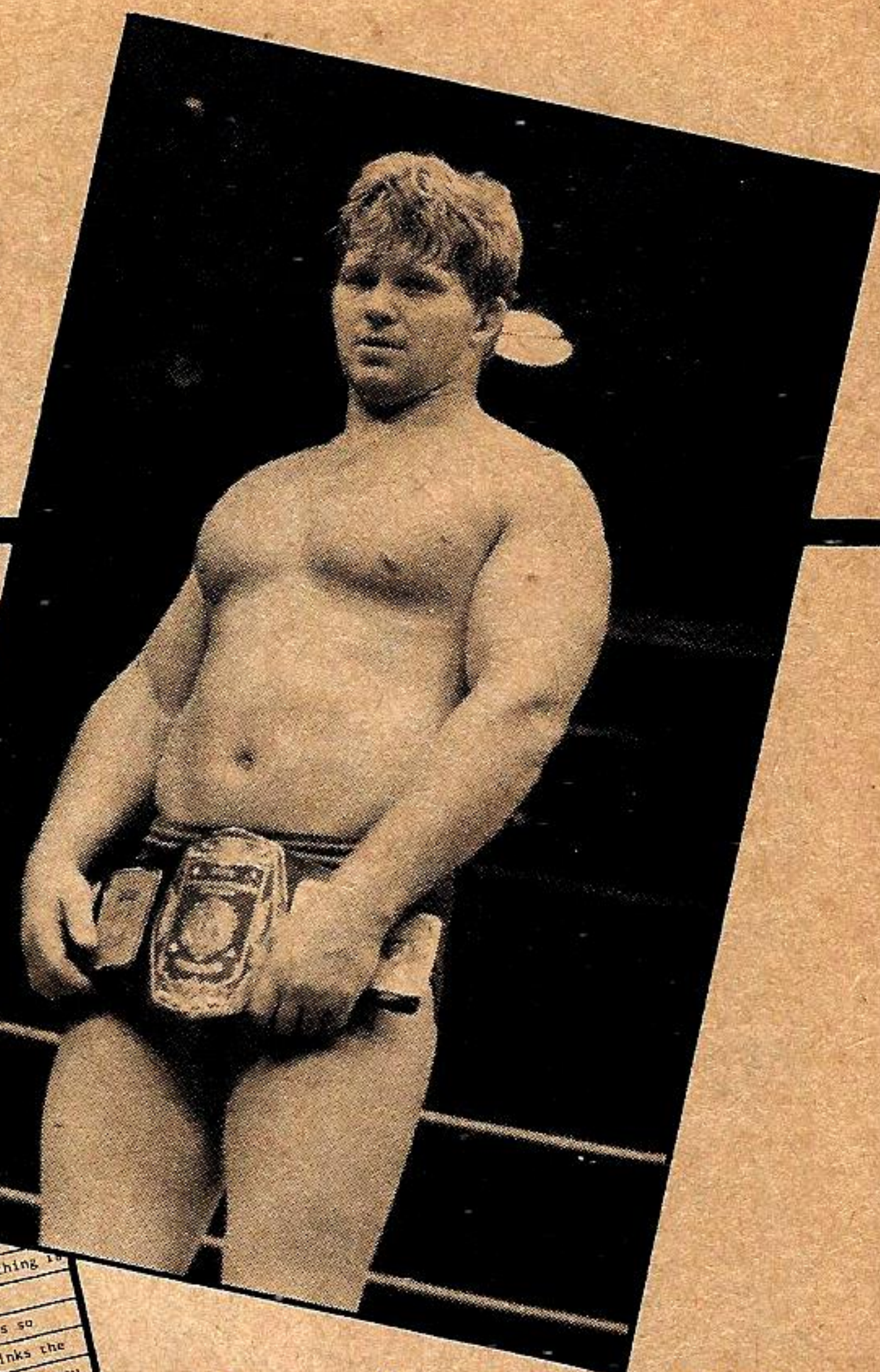
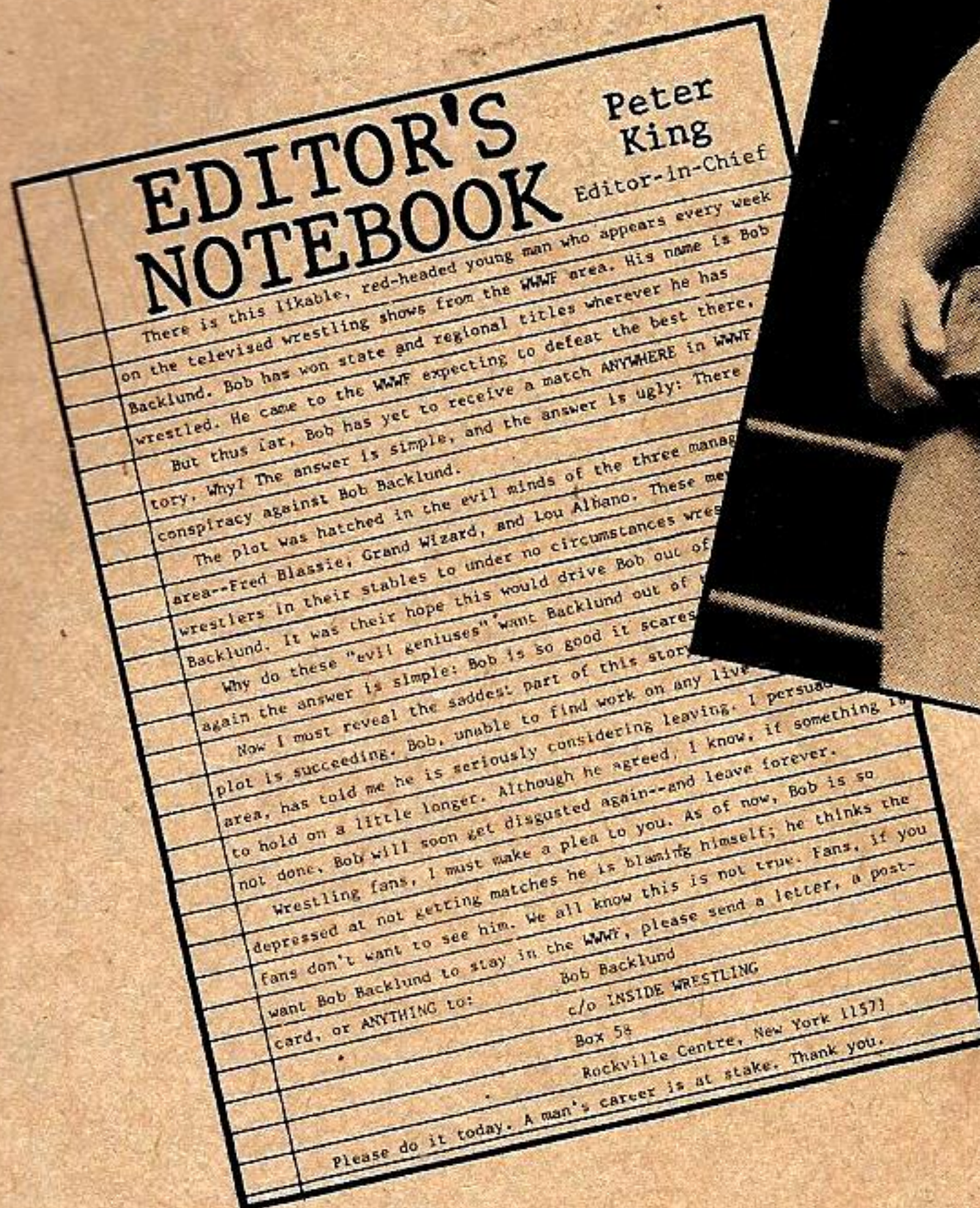
ALL OVER THE nation, people shouted for joy when they looked in their mailboxes. Bob Backlund had sent them a personal note of thanks! Many will keep the photograph postcard for the rest of their lives.

Each person got a handwritten reply to a letter they sent to the WWF, through this magazine, demanding Bob be allowed to wrestle within the federation. By now, most fans know of the conspiracy by WWF managers to keep Backlund from wrestling their men. The plot was destroyed only by the concerted effort of fans writing the commissioners to stand firm against this conspiracy.

"The fans saved my career," Bob declares, "and I wanted to thank each and every one. After all, my life and dreams were on the line. It wasn't good enough to issue a general statement through this magazine. Each person had to know I meant them.

"I thought of a number of ways of doing it. When all was said and done, the best idea was a postcard with my photo and a handwritten thank-you. If they could see my face and read my thanks, it would be almost like being there in person. So that's what I did. And the fans seem to be happy about it."

There's no doubt the fans are delighted with the postcard. None of them expected thanks. They had written about something important as a matter of principle. There was no thought of being rewarded. It's rare when the good people get a nice



After reading of Bob's plight in Editor's Notebook (left), fans sent Bob letters of encouragement. Each one of the fans received a photo postcard from Bob with a personal message (above).

surprise. Bob Backlund is more than a superb athlete. He's a remarkable human being.

Bob refuses to discuss how much money the postcards cost him because "you can't measure these things in dollars and cents. If it cost \$1 million, it wouldn't begin to pay for the happiness the fans gave me. It's wrong to even think in those terms."

There's no way to put a price on the fans' happiness, either. Those who have tried to buy the postcards found the owners won't part with them for any price. They have quickly become collector's items. The value will continue to grow as the years pass. One expert in wrestling memorabilia believes the postcards will be worth over \$500 each by the end of the decade.

Still, money is beside the point when discussing these postcards. What's most important is how the fans feel upon receiving them. Many have written Bob to describe their delight.

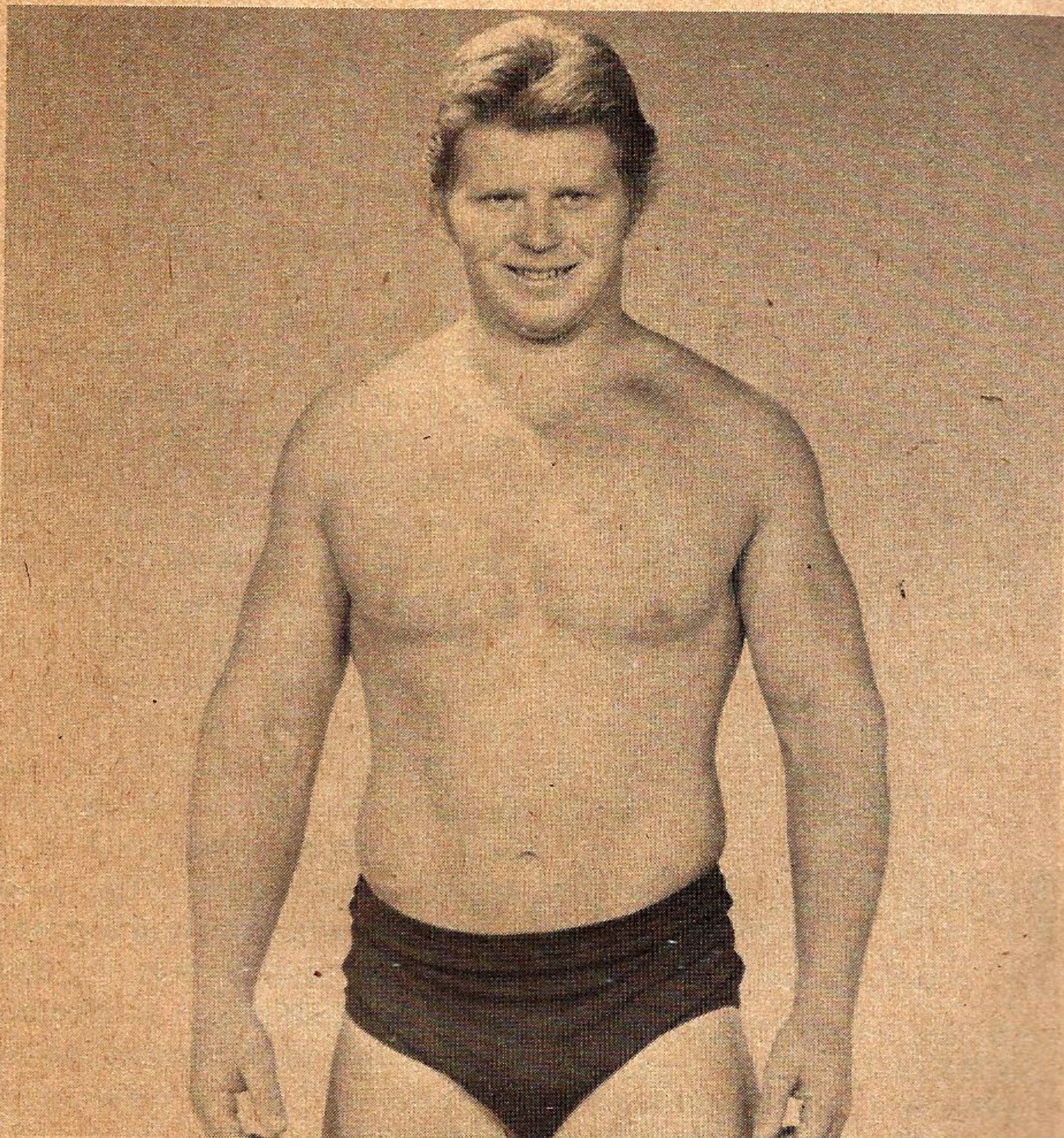
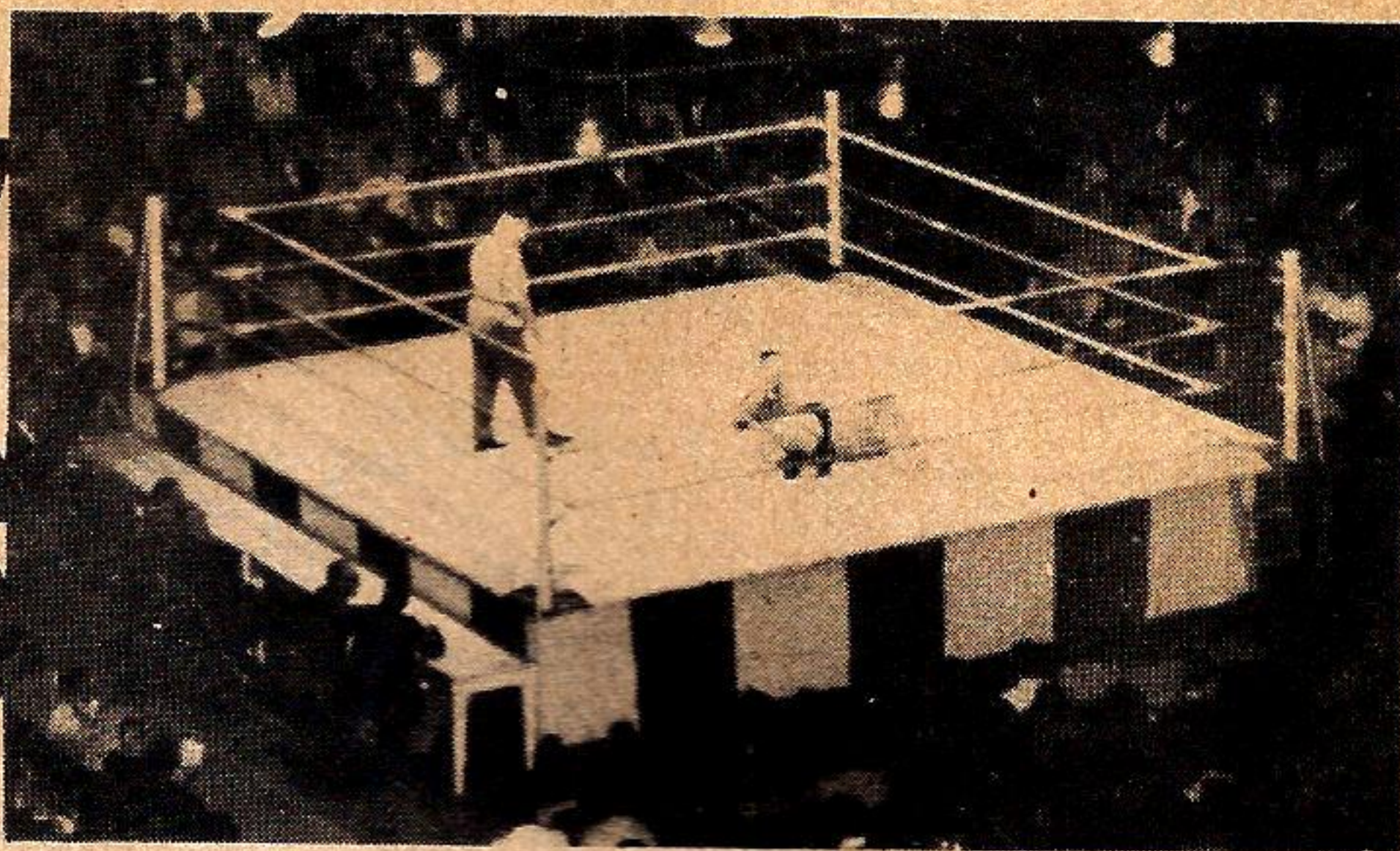
"When I wrote saying you should be allowed to wrestle in the WWF," William Geery of Chicago, Illinois, relates, "I never expected to get an answer. After all, I'm not even in the WWF area. I sent my letter because I believe in justice for everyone, even if it doesn't personally affect me.

"So you can imagine my surprise when I discovered the postcard in my morning mail. You had absolutely nothing material to gain by sending it to me. It was just an act of kindness. In this world, that's something special. You are obviously someone special."

(Continued on page 62)

There are all-star wrestlers. There are also all-star human beings. Rarely are the two qualities found in the same person. One such remarkable human being is wrestling's young superstar, Bob Backlund

SINCERELY YOURS



Bob Backlund (above) is the man many predict will eventually win one of the major world titles. First on Bob's list is the WWWF title. He is desperately trying to get a match against Superstar Billy Graham. Nick Bockwinkle (above right, fingerlocking Jim Brunzell) was the subject of an *INSIDE WRESTLING* "Capsule Profile" in our October 1977 edition.

BRUNO'S PREDICTION

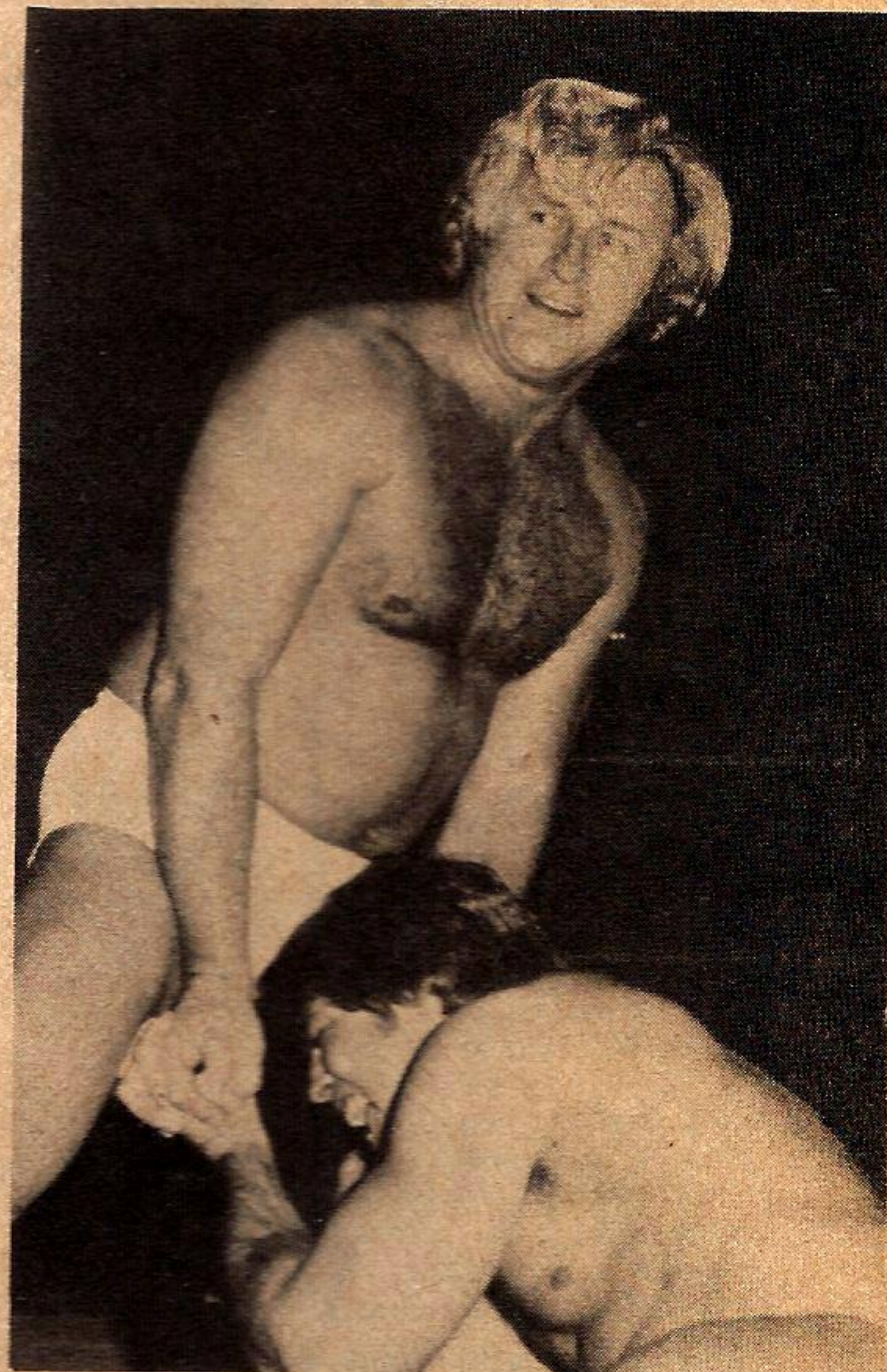
When a man like Bruno Sammartino predicts, "Bobby Backlund is the Next WWWF Champion!" (October 1977), you know it is time to sit up and take notice. If he says this is going to happen, we can almost certainly expect it!

Of course, it is only logical.

Bob Backlund is the best new wrestler to come along in ages. He has more talent than a lot of veterans. In fact, he is probably the best young wrestler to enter the sport since Bruno himself joined the professional ranks!

I guess Sammartino knows talent when he sees it.

ARTHUR ARMSTRONG
Danbury, Conn.



BOCKWINKLE'S PROFILE

Thank you very much for your "Capsule Profile" on Nick Bockwinkle in the October 1977 issue. Nick happens to be one of my favorite wrestlers, and I had begun to wonder when you were going to feature him in this section.

I know he is not the most ethical wrestler in the world, but he is a very exciting grappler to watch. You know that a Nick Bockwinkle match is never going to be dull; Nick makes sure of that!

HARRIET HALEY
Evanston, Ill.

(Continued on page 48)

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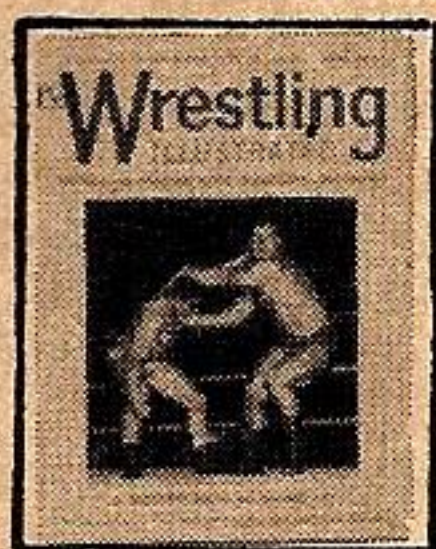
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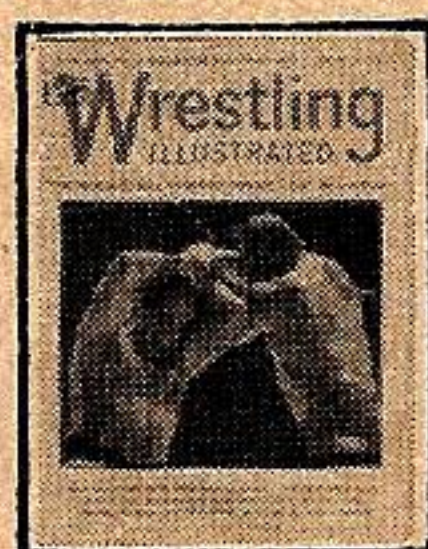
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BEHIND THE DOOR

(Continued from Page 8)

Andre, who has defeated many of this sport's most notorious wrestlers and has met all challengers, wants to oppose Mascaras because, "He is the best at what he does, and I am the best at what I do." Being one of the most competitive men I know, Andre wants to find out if he can do what not too many other wrestlers have done—beat the ultra-talented Mil Mascaras. I, for one, can understand just how he feels. It is the sign of a truly great athlete.

But now, I have gotten word that every top rulebreaker wants to see a match between Andre and Mascaras. Why? As Fred Blassie puts it, "The two of those pencilnecks are so competitive that they'll kill each other to win. Good! Let them destroy each other. It'll be two less geeks we have to bother with."

Last night I called Andre up, and the two of us had a long talk. I told him that I'm sure a match between him and Mascaras would be nothing less than a classic. But I also explained to him just how much the rulebreakers want to see an Andre the Giant-Mil Mascaras "Battle of the Titans."

Use your tremendous skills on rulebreakers," I told him, not on other fan favorites. If you're going to do somebody in, do in Blassie. Do in Ric Flair. Do in Superbum Billy Graham. But as far as you against Mascaras, let it forever remain a mystery as to who would have won?"

"You have made a good point," Andre told me. "I'll think it over."

I'm glad, for wrestling desperately needs the likes of Mil Mascaras and Andre the Giant. But it needs them facing

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and wiping out rulebreakers—not each other.

I recently paid a visit to Mr. Wrestling II, who was hospitalized in Georgia after being attacked by Rock Hunter and Pak Song.

"I was being given an award," Mr. Wrestling II told me, "when all of a sudden Pak Song and Rock Hunter came up to congratulate me. I should have known better than to trust them. The next thing I knew, they had taken my trophy and were beating me with it."

Mr. Wrestling II suffered partial paralysis of his arms and neck, but doctors say he is rapidly improving, and should be returning to action soon.

"I swear I'll get revenge on Song and Hunter," said Mr. Wrestling II. I promised him on the night he faces those two, no matter when or where it may be, I would be there. I'll make sure Pak Song and Rock Hunter are shaken up before the match even starts!

At dinner with Dusty Rhodes the other night, I was amazed at his popularity. Fans besieged him for his autograph, and women nearly fainted when he planted a kiss on their cheeks.

When the subject of Billy Graham came up, Rhodes said, "He is out of my league in every way. He has a face that looks like something the Lord whacked with an ugly stick when he was born. Fans have told me they can hardly wait until somebody takes the title from Graham. Well I know who that somebody is. He is the most beautiful, most gorgeous hunk of manhood ever to step into an arena. He is destined to become the greatest wrestler in history. And daddy, you know I'm talking about the 'American Dream', Dusty Rhodes." How can I argue with him? All the fans in the world seem to be climbing on the Dusty bandwagon. □

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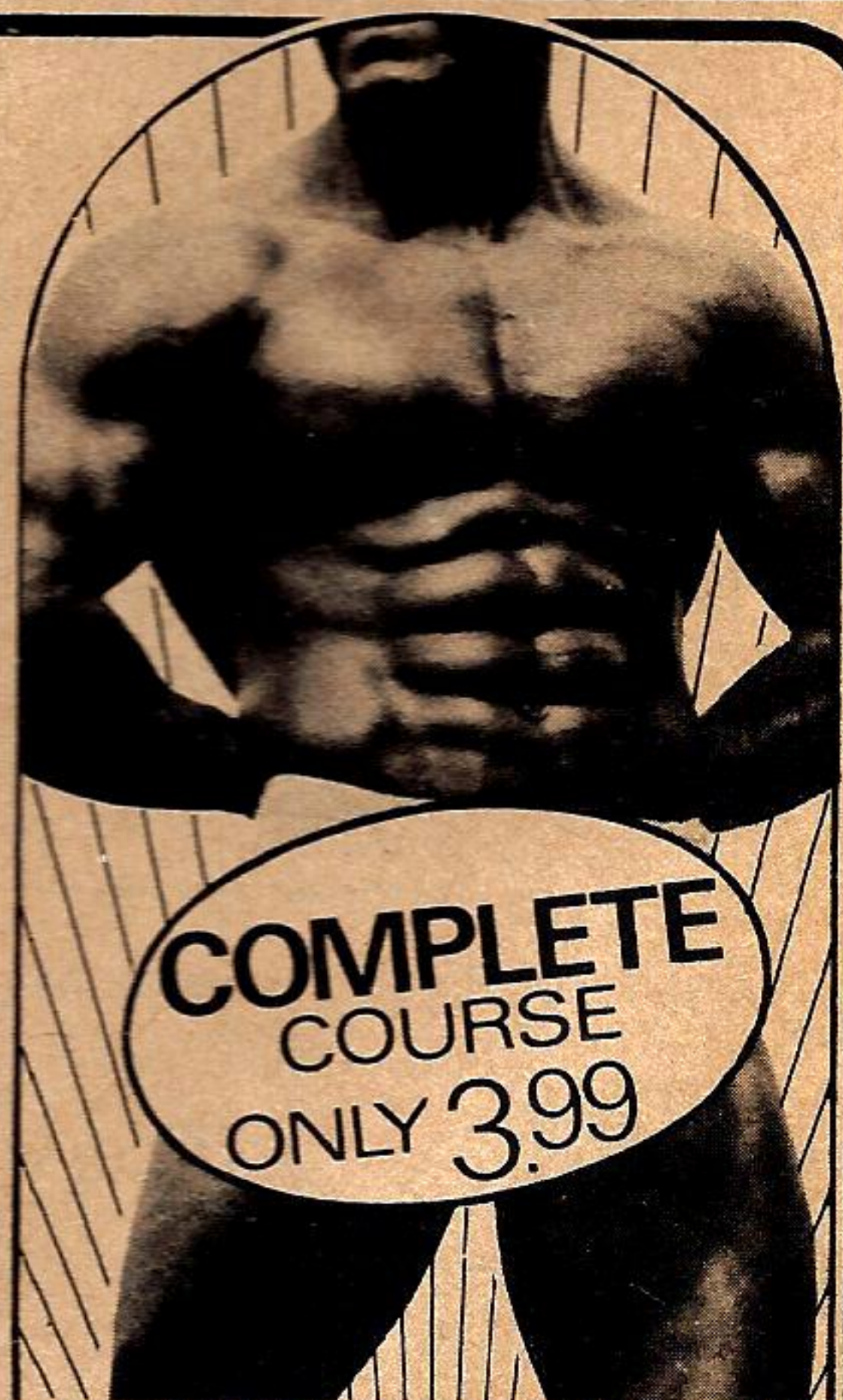
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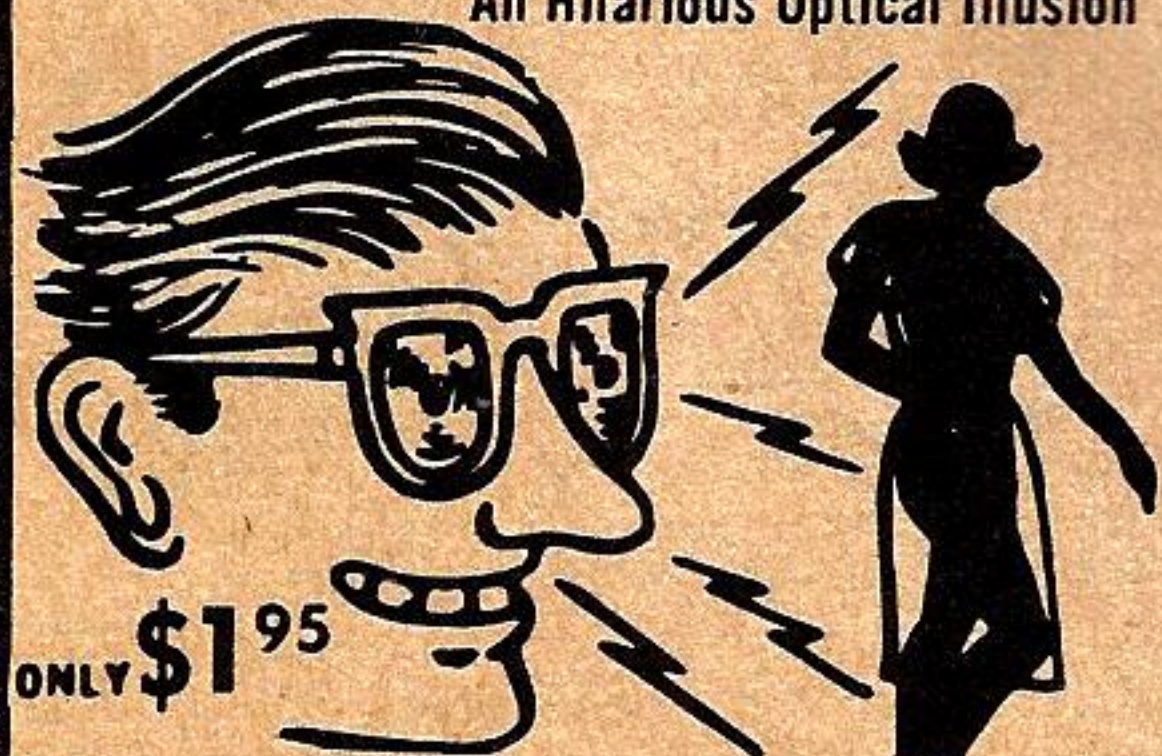
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BODYSLAMS & PINFALLS

(Continued from Page 10)



Nick Bockwinkel, shown here with his manager, Bobby Heenan, is confident enough of his own abilities to enter the tournament of champions. He says he will take on the winner of the Race-Graham battle and win!

If Bockwinkel should be triumphant, Heenan promises, "Nick will give the loser of the Graham-Race match a bout. That way, he'll defeat both other champions. This is too important for anyone to say Nick just got lucky. This is the most important thing to happen to professional sports in this century!"

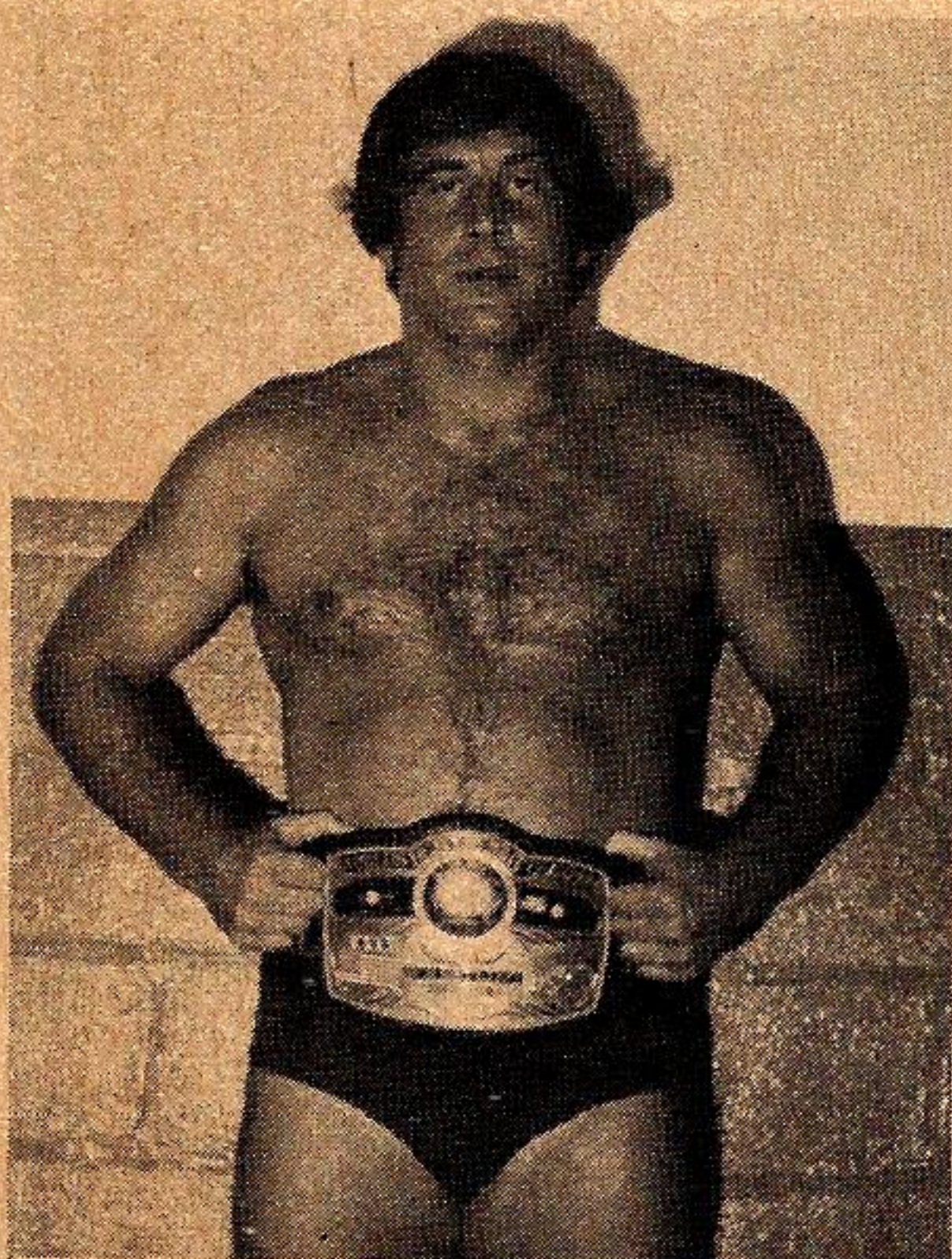
And when future generations ask why wrestling was split three ways for so long, scientific champions will be given the blame. It

was due to their greed, stupidity, cowardice, and hypocrisy. The shame is theirs.

What will astonish fans of the future is how these cowards managed to win popular support. How, they will wonder, could wrestling fans of the past have been stupid? Could there really be a reason why they had applauded men who disgraced the sport by destroying the title? Perhaps these primitive people were afraid of being bewitched by the evil

champions, Brisco and Gagne and Sammartino. Will little children be told, "Go to bed or the Bruno Sammartino's will get you!"?

Whatever, this is no time to look back in the past. The harm caused by the former champions will be corrected. Then wrestling will have a single champion, a man to be admired. Will he be Graham or Race or Bockwinkle? It matters not, all are fine men and courageous athletes. Any one would be a credit to wrestling.



When he was champion, Jack Brisco was not willing to be a participant in a tournament to determine which of the three champions was best.

Perhaps now, the fans will realize the so-called rulebreakers are the best men in wrestling. Instead of booing these great athletes, let's applaud the saviors of the sport. They have earned the undying gratitude of all who love wrestling.

I think this column should end with three quotes.

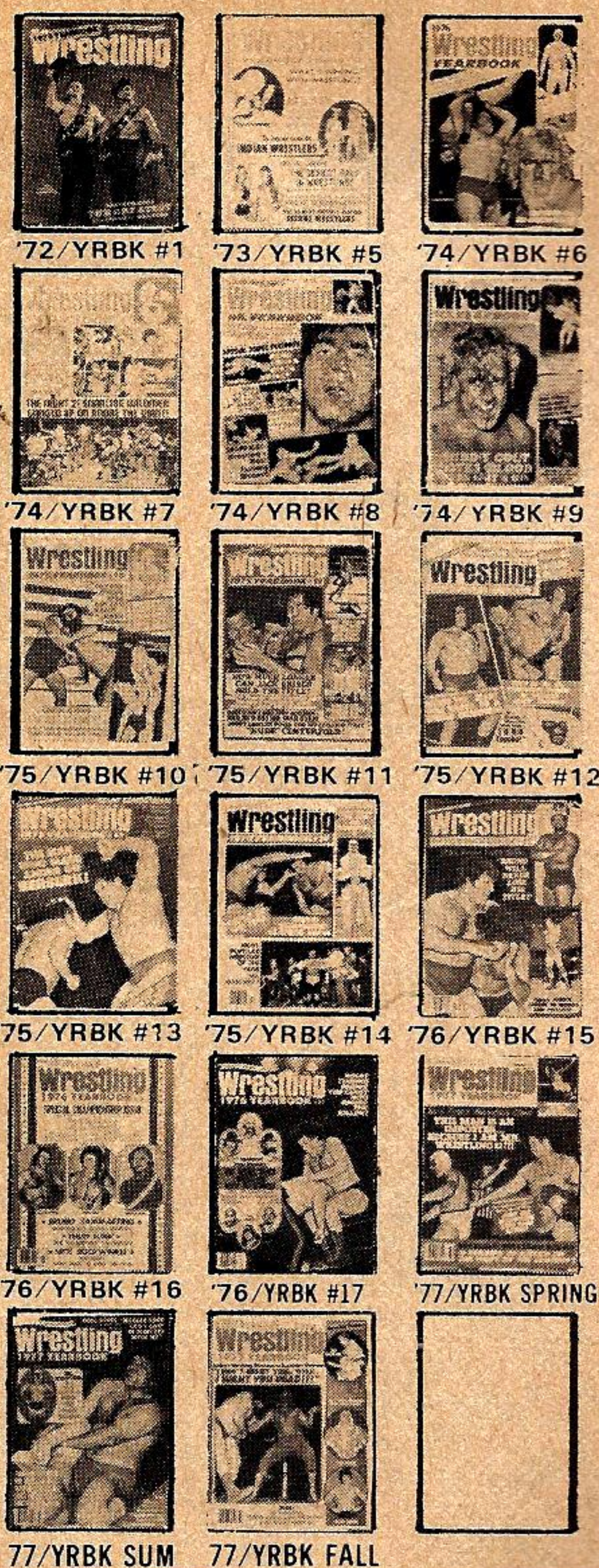
SUPERSTAR BILLY GRAHAM: "I want to prove I'm the greatest wrestler alive. Until I own all three title belts, uniting them into a single world's championship, I won't be satisfied. A real champion wants to be champion over all."

HARLEY RACE: "When I was growing up, there was only one wrestling champion in the world. Kids today deserve the same kind of hero to admire."

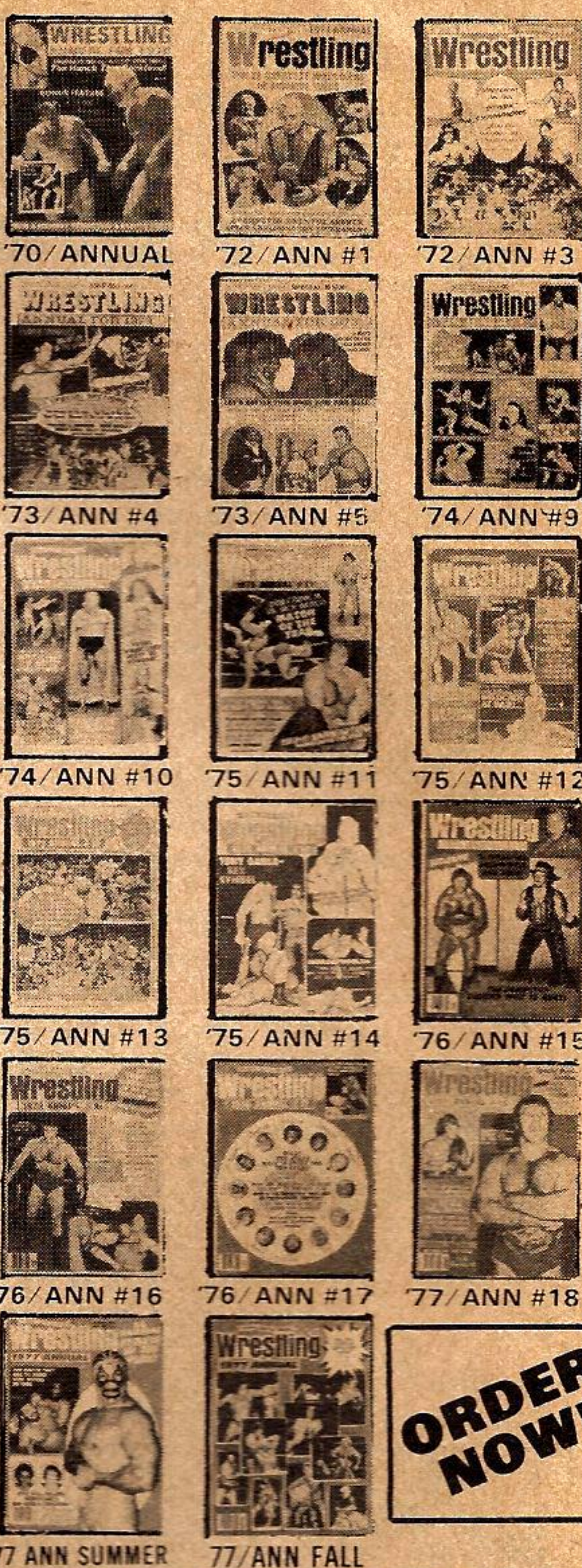
NICK BOCKWINKLE: "I'm going to take it all. That's a promise." □

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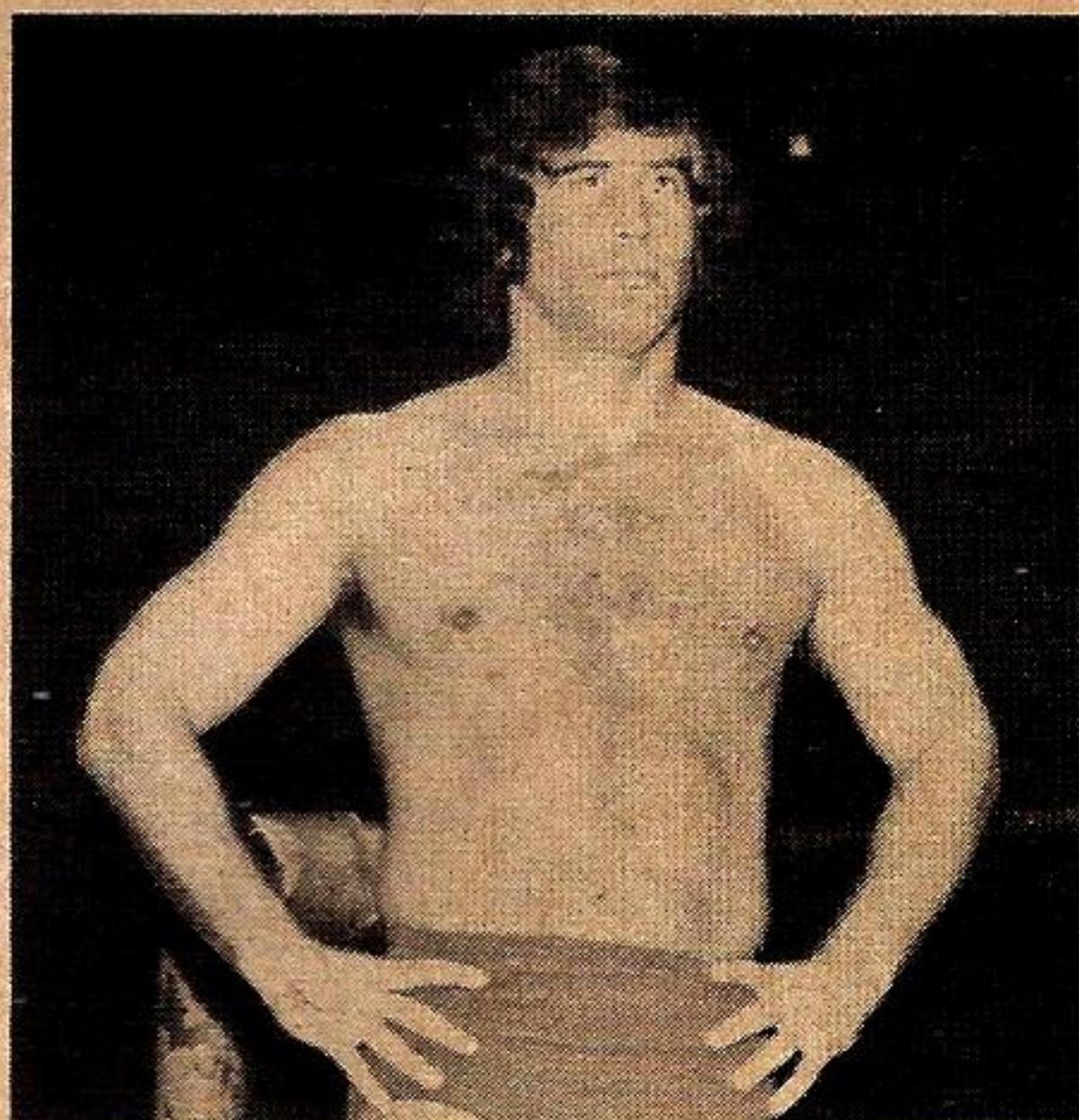
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SINCERELY YOURS

(Continued from Page 43)



Jack Brisco (above) has not had an easy
time with his opponents this past year. Is
Superstar Graham afraid of Ivan Putski
(below)? Graham swears he isn't!



BLAMES PUTSKI

I have difficulty accepting the
fact that Ivan Putski is having so
difficult a time as you picture. In
the story, "Ivan Putski Is Getting
the Shaft" (October 1977), you
make it appear that Superstar
Graham is deliberately avoiding
Ivan Putski. I don't think this is
so. Graham would not avoid
anyone, especially Ivan.

After all, Superstar is the
greatest, and he has nothing to
fear from Ivan Putski. There is no
way Billy could ever lose to
someone like Putski. Graham is
the best champion the WWWF
could ever have!

SHELDON JERGENS
York, Penn.

BRISCO'S PLAIN

Poor Jack Brisco! He's having
such a difficult time regaining
the glory he once had, he's had
to resort to seeking outside help.
I am referring to your article,
"Someone Please Save Jack
Brisco's career" (October 1977).

I didn't know Jack Brisco
would ever have so much trouble
defeating a man like Blackjack
Lanza. Indeed, I would think an
opponent of this calibre would
be no trouble at all for Jack. I
guess I was wrong, and Brisco is
in for some rough times ahead.

Jack Brisco used to be the best
wrestler around. Times have
changed, or so it appears.
Maybe someone out there will
be able to save Jack's career.
After all, we need him to defeat
Harley Race.

PAULINE FRANKEL
Canton, Ohio

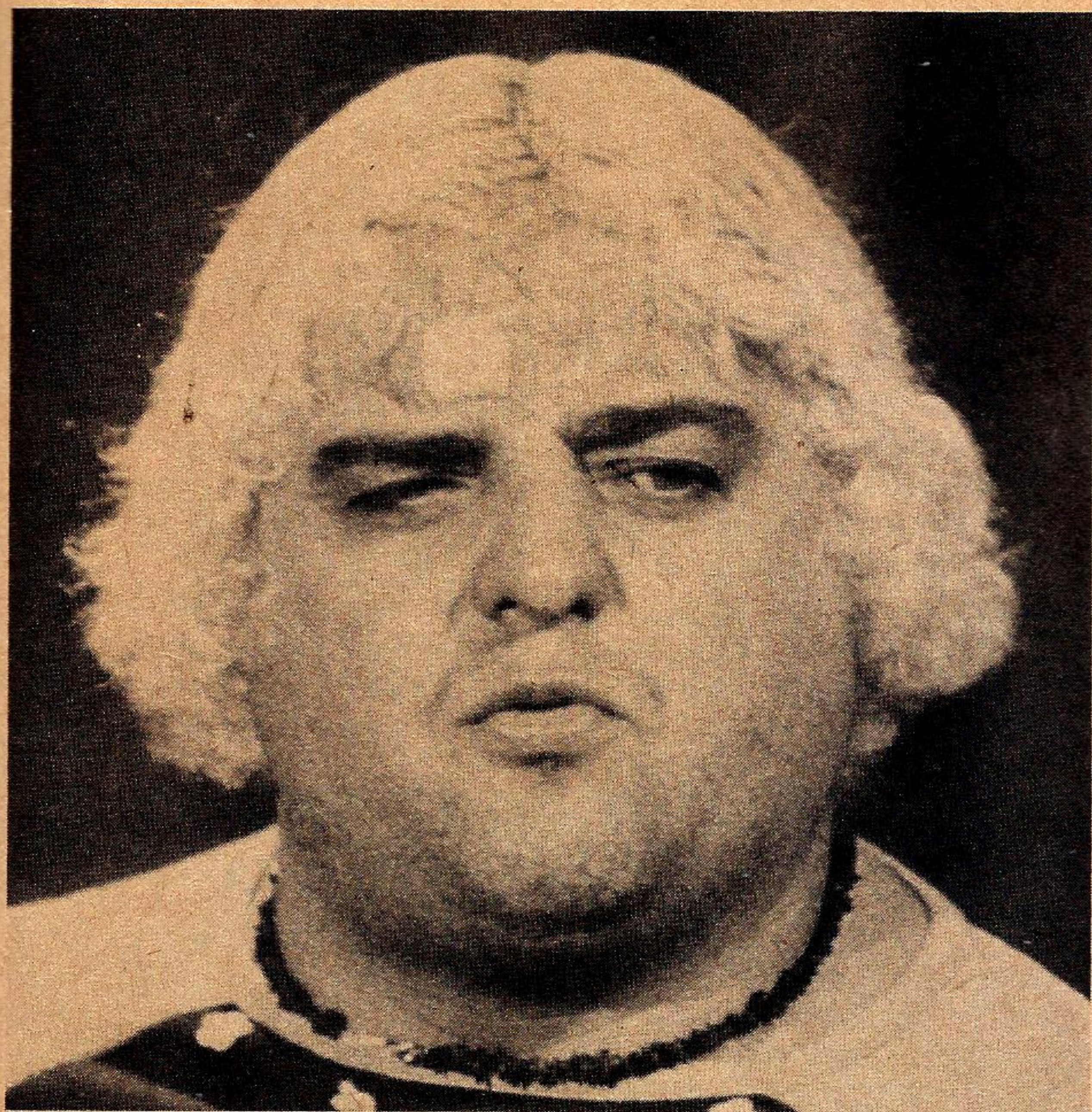
BITTER PROBLEMS

"Andre & Strongbow: Only
Their Greatness Can Conquer
the Demons" (October 1977)
pointed out some bitter
problems confronting these two
great grapplers. However, I do
not believe they will be able to
overcome them and go on to
greater glory together.

Face it. Andre the Giant is at
his best as a single. While there
have been moments of brilliance
with Strongbow, the team is
doomed to fail. As they should.
They are both needed as single
wrestlers. There are other men
who are better suited for tag
team wrestling. These two
should be allowed to do what
they do best.

Their greatness can conquer
the demons. The question is
should it?

GREG RAINES
Downsview, Ont.



Dusty Rhodes makes a point during his "Hotseat" interview. Dusty is one of the sport's most controversial athletes.

BEST POSSIBILITIES

I really like Dusty Rhodes, and I agree wholeheartedly when he says, "I Have Nothing More to Prove!" (October 1977). This "Hotseat" interview really brought out the best in this greatest of all possible people.

The only thing separating Dusty from perfection is the gaining of the NWA title. And that should come soon. I long for the day when Rhodes will be able to wear a championship belt around his waist. He most certainly deserves it. And when that day comes, Dusty will truly be the greatest wrestler of all!

DAVID YAEGER
Columbia, S.C. □

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ROCKY JOHNSON

(Continued from Page 23)

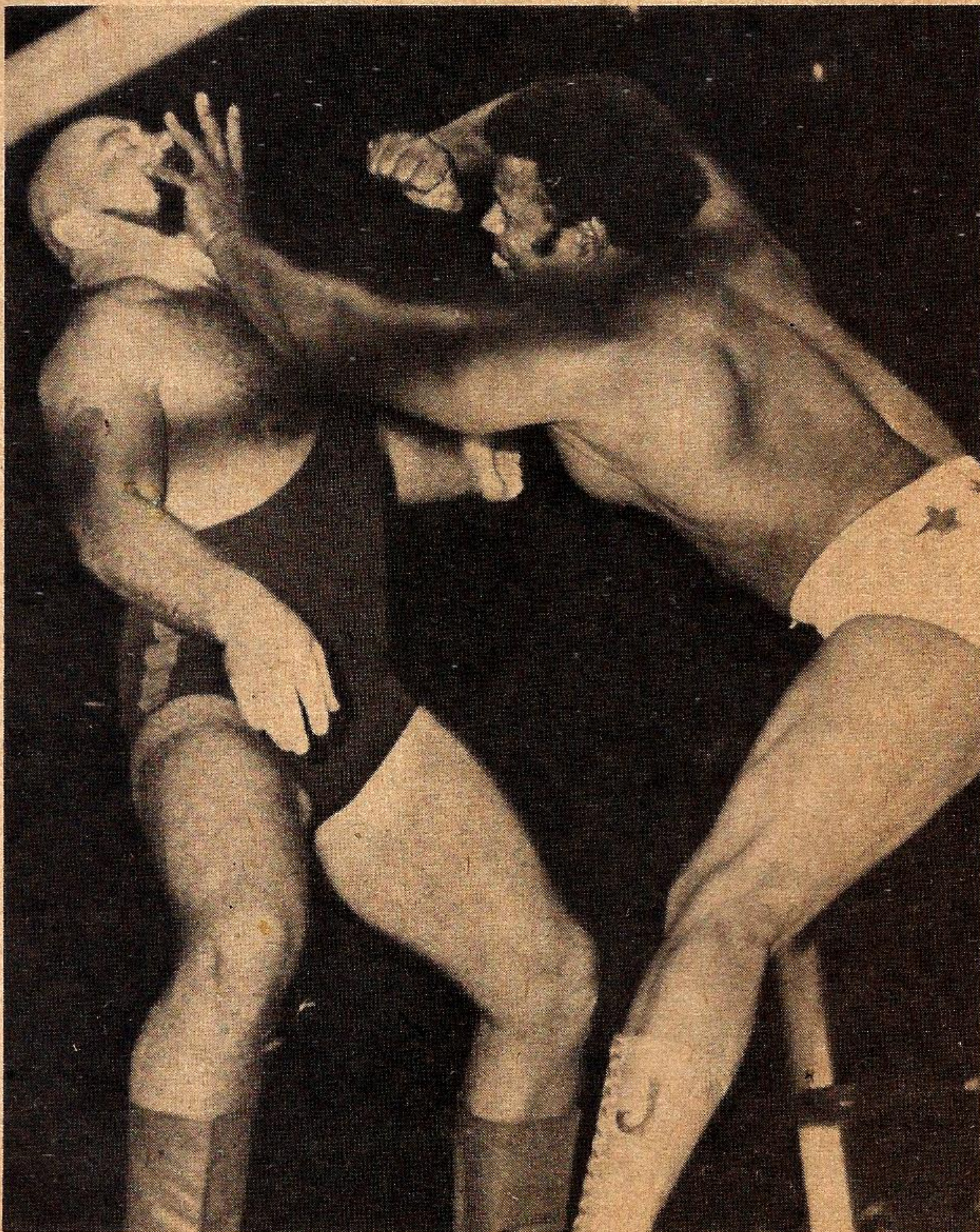
Koloff grinned menacingly as he waited for the bell to ring. When it did, Ivan attacked immediately.

As often happens in a Koloff match, the beginning moments were for the most part scientific. Then, with controlled cruelty, Ivan punched his fist into Rocky's throat. The illegal maneuver went undetected by the referee. As Johnson lay stunned on the canvas, Koloff went to work.

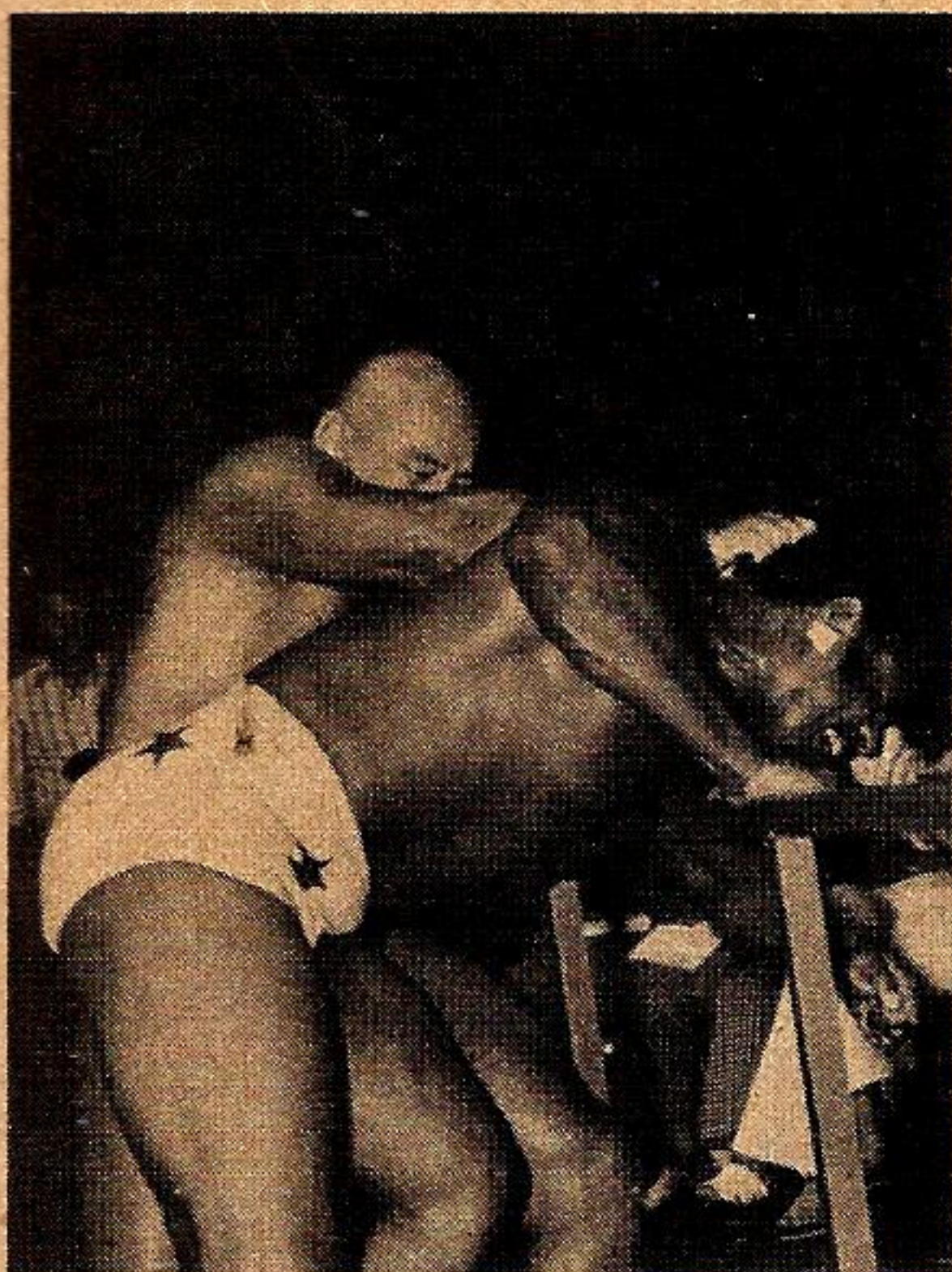
With horrible brilliance, Koloff

tortured Johnson. Every illegal trick in the book was used to maim and cripple this brave grappler. Shooting pains coursed through Rocky's body. His only defense was to respond with illegal tactics of his own. But Rocky had more important things on his mind than stopping the pain. He had to uphold the nation's honor.

Slowly but surely, Koloff beat him to the ground. The victim crumpled. Every muscle ached. His



Rocky comes like a bolt of lightning, crackling a series of punches and forearm smashes against Koloff's head. The Russian mat star managed to weather this torrent of blows and then started his own assault. As one might expect, Koloff's attack consisted of mostly illegal tactics.



Koloff savagely smashes Johnson's head into the wooden rail. It's a typical move by the notorious grappler.

movements were awkward and sluggish. Still, he kept on struggling, never resorting to illegal tactics.

Koloff grew more and more reckless, frustrated that his victim was still conscious. Finally, his cunning left him and the referee spotted Ivan's illegal maneuvers. The grappler was immediately disqualified. Rocky Johnson was the winner.

Koloff stormed back to the dressing room. Rocky was on his knees, struggling to stand. The referee tried to help him but Johnson brushed him away. "A man has to stand on his own," Rocky declared through clenched teeth.

And thus began Rocky's journey back to the dressing room. The applause, tears, and finally the singing of "God Bless America" made the agony meaningless. His success was the success of a country's principles, its dedication to honesty and decency no matter how great the sacrifice. Rocky Johnson was America in a wrestling ring. All the Ivan Koloffs in the world couldn't beat him.

Ivan Koloff may be able to walk with less pain than Rocky Johnson, but the Russian Bear will never be able to stand as tall. ☐

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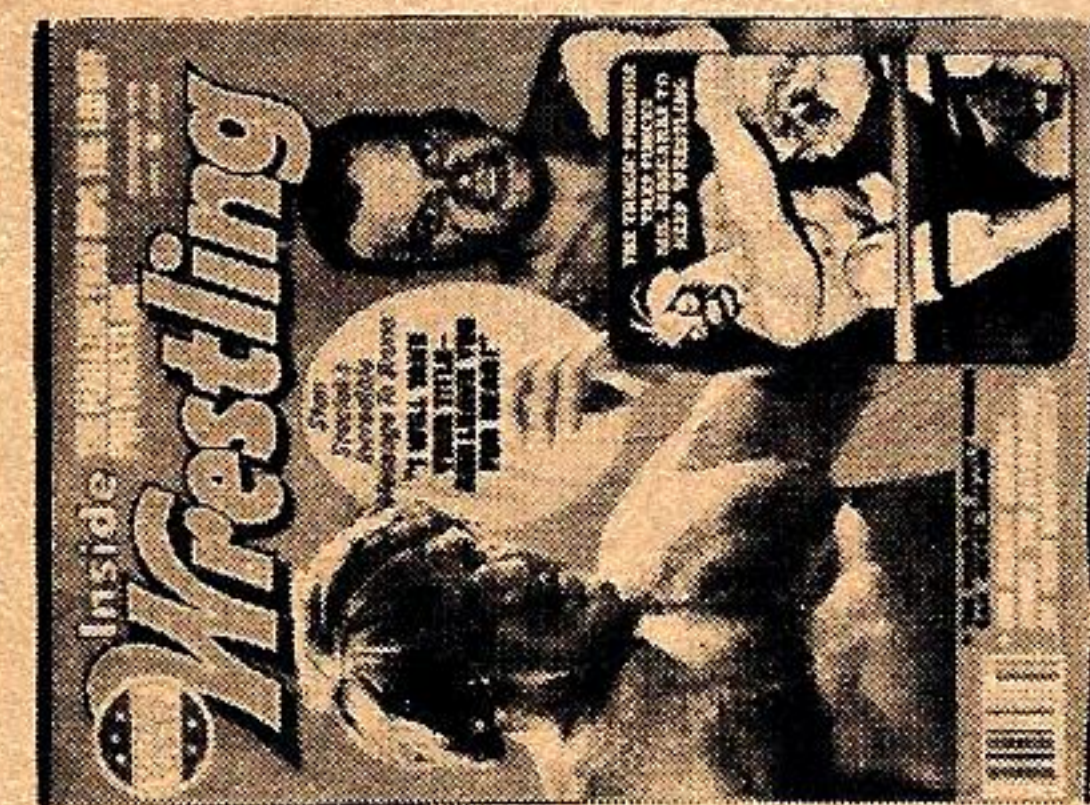
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ANDRE THE GIANT

(Continued from Page 33)

our sources for this article. Two participants in the plot, hoping for future favors, told us about it. It will be a cold day in hell before we grant favors to men like this. Andre admitted it was true but suggested we kill the story. "These are desperate men," he advised, "and they don't like being publicly humiliated. What I did to them was more humiliation than they can stand."

When Hart and Heenan heard we knew the story, they immediately called our offices. We wouldn't dignify their threats by repeating them. However, wrestling fans have the right to know these men tried to strongarm us into silence. These are the type of men who become wrestling managers.

One manager, who shall remain nameless, didn't threaten but begged. It seems he used the



Andre's huge fist comes crashing into Gary Hart's face, sending the manager back into the ropes. One can be sure Hart would be a harsh taskmaster if he ever had Andre in his clutches. Who dares imagine the consequences?



Lou Albano was one of the unscrupulous masterminds behind the plot to buy up Andre the Giant's contracts.

money he and his wife were saving for their children's college education to instead buy a piece of Andre's contract. If his wife ever found out, "she'd nail me to the wall." We'll be glad to supply hammer and nails.

So far, we have received 84 phone calls, 61 letters, countless warnings from "people who know," and the advice of friends not to print this story. Managers are dangerous men who do not like to be held up to public ridicule.

The public deserves to know the truth. That is always more important than public safety. And much of the truth, the best part, concerns Andre the Giant. It is only fitting he should have the last words.

"These managers are more powerful than I ever imagined," he believes, "and they must be watched at all times. Any group of people that can raise \$10 million is very, very dangerous. I only hope others will be able to defeat them as I have. This is a war for the very existence of wrestling!" ☐

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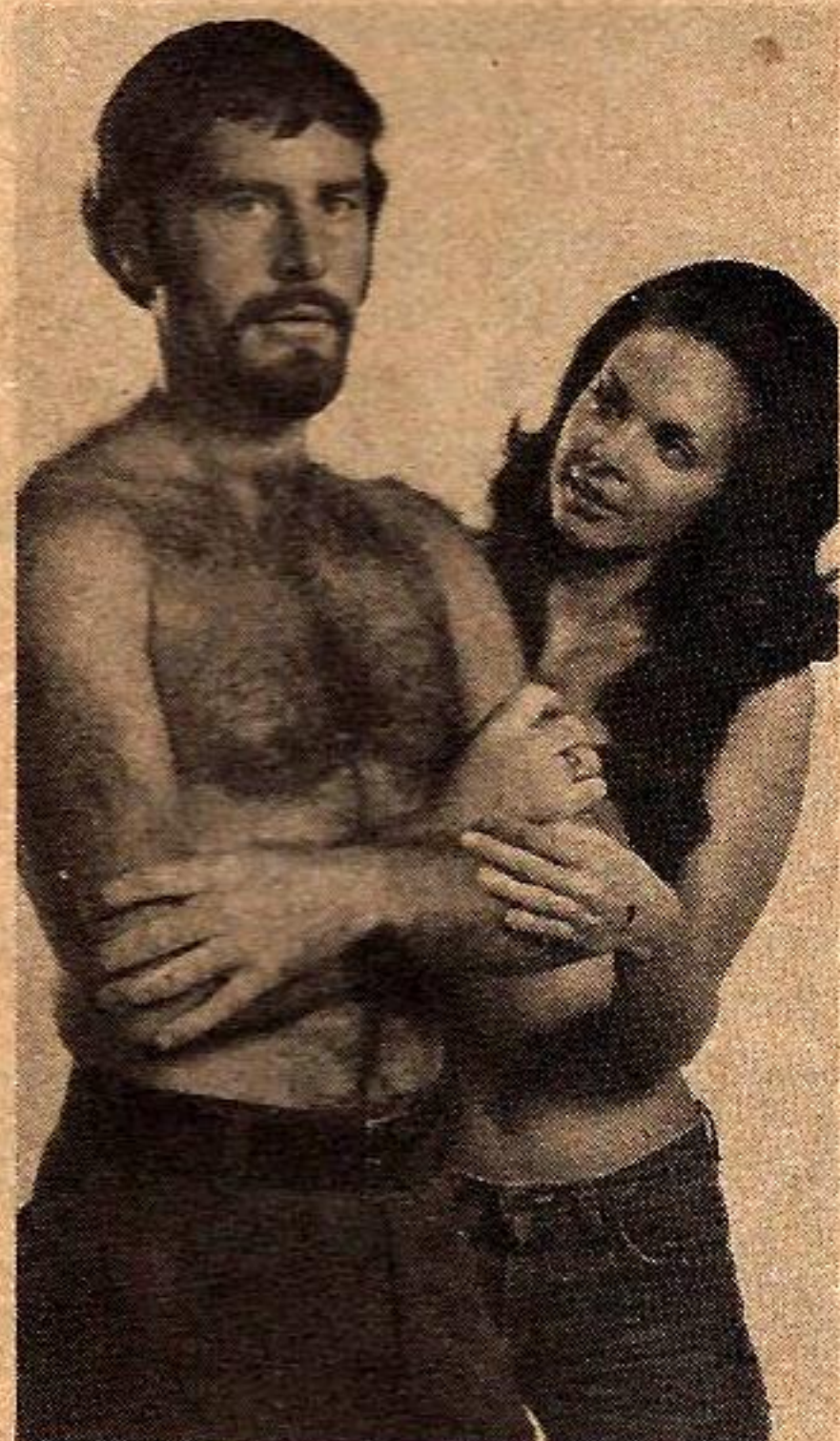
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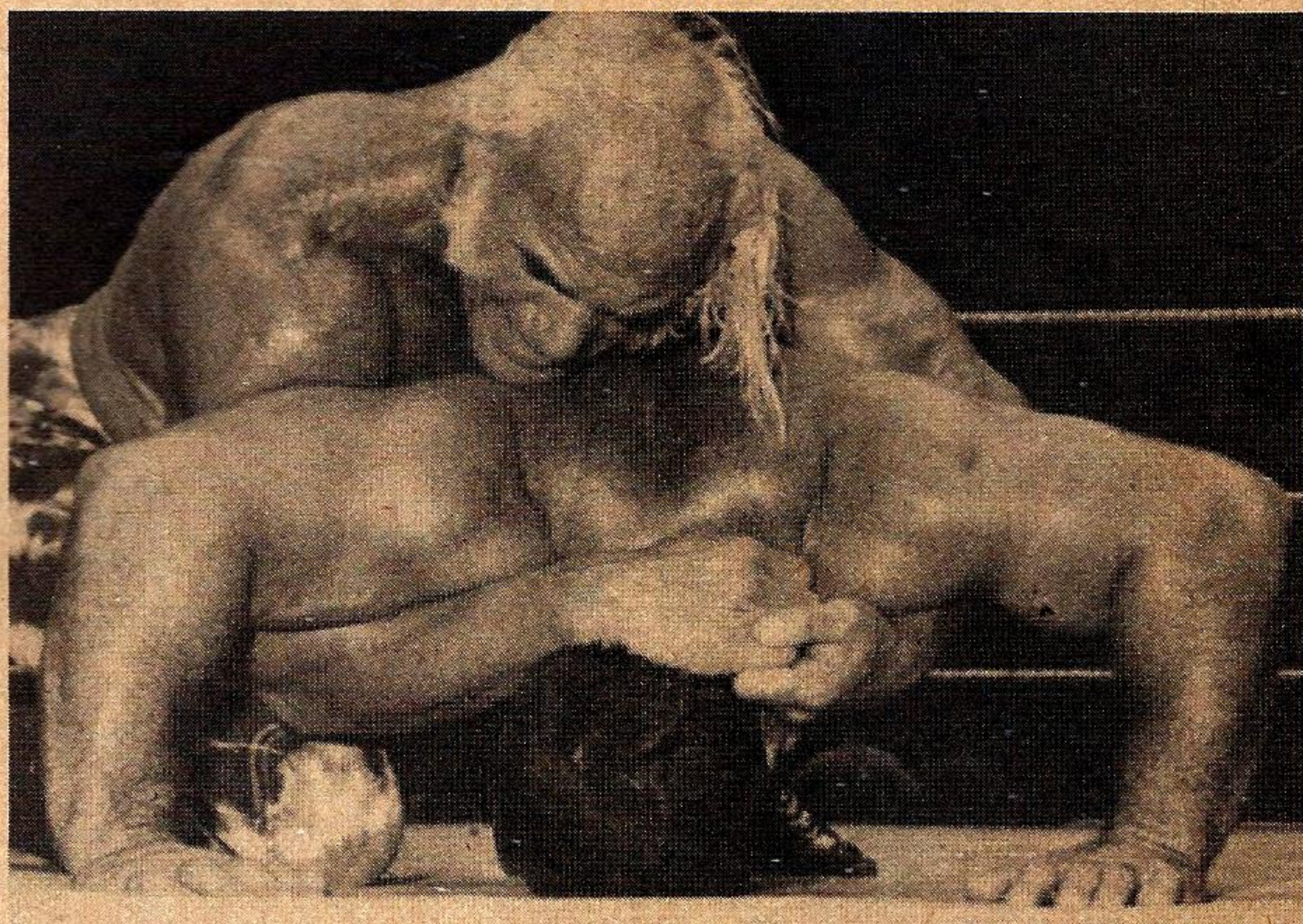
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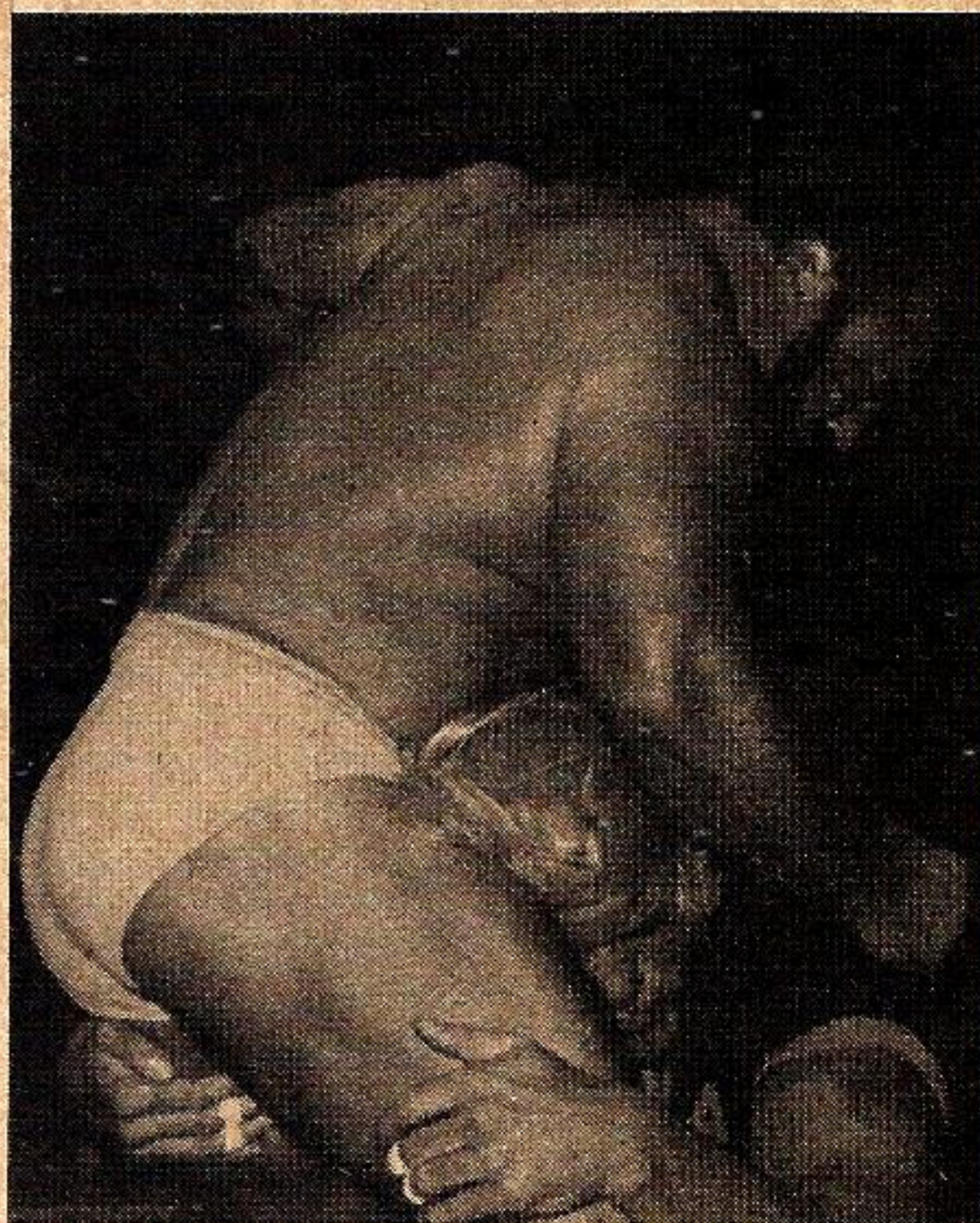


IVAN PUTSKI

(Continued from Page 37)



Above: Ivan tries to bridge out of Graham's full-nelson. Below: Ivan batters Graham to his knees before the bout even begins.



said. "If he fails, there can be no reason why he should be given more opportunities. He's had more than enough. If he can't win the belt, he can't win the belt. That's it. It's clear to me that he simply is not as good as me!"

Putski was furious when he heard this pronouncement. It sometimes takes a very long and concerted effort to win a major championship. If anyone should realize this, it would be Graham, for whom it took several years to

win a belt. However, that could be the very reason Superstar was cutting Ivan off without hope.

Faced with the prospect of only one last chance to win the WWWF title—the goal of his life—Ivan went into very rigorous training. He left the gym only to sleep. He was always back early the next day, rising before the sun to begin his morning exercises. Every maneuver Ivan ever learned went up for re-examination. If Putski couldn't do it perfectly, he wouldn't do it at all during the match.

But he trained too hard. He was ready two weeks before the match. And he never quite reached so high a level again. But this was not his only major error. There would be more before the match was over.

Putski thought he was ready on the night of the battle. In fact, he was no longer in top form; he had passed that point. Moreover, Superstar Graham was in excellent shape. He was quite prepared for anything Ivan might attempt. He was ready to thwart Putski's ambitions.

The match started out fairly even. Both men were doing their

best to counter the other man's moves. It could be said that Ivan had a slight edge—or at least it appeared so. However, appearances can be deceiving, especially in this situation.

Ivan decided to execute a particular strategy he had perfected in training. It was not the best possible one he could have chosen, but it would do the job, or so he thought. Yet Graham was ready for this particular course of action.

Putski had thought it best to try to confuse Billy, thus making it difficult for Superstar to brawl. The less control Graham had, the more Ivan would have. But Graham knew what was coming, and he knew how to counter it. He turned the tables on Putski. Poor Ivan was confused and frustrated. And worse, he was losing.

Of course, Ivan was not the only one to make a mistake. Superstar made a major one—he decided to finish Putski off the wrong way. By using blatantly illegal maneuvers, he risked immediate disqualification. And this indeed was to come to pass, but not before something else happened.

Frustrated that his plans were not working, Ivan became decidedly desperate. Instead of sticking to scientific maneuvers, he began to brawl with Graham, using tactics which were less-than-legal. That was his biggest mistake.

The referee disqualified both men.

Ivan was furious, but mostly at himself. Graham was jubilant; he had eliminated forever his toughest rival. Happy, he screamed across the ring, "Ivan Putski . . . you blew it! Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" The laugh seemed the cruelest blow of all.

But he could not forget those five words: "Ivan Putski . . . you blew it." They would haunt him for a long time to come. □

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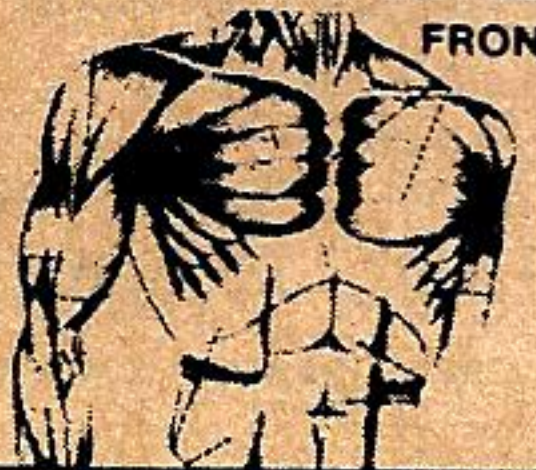
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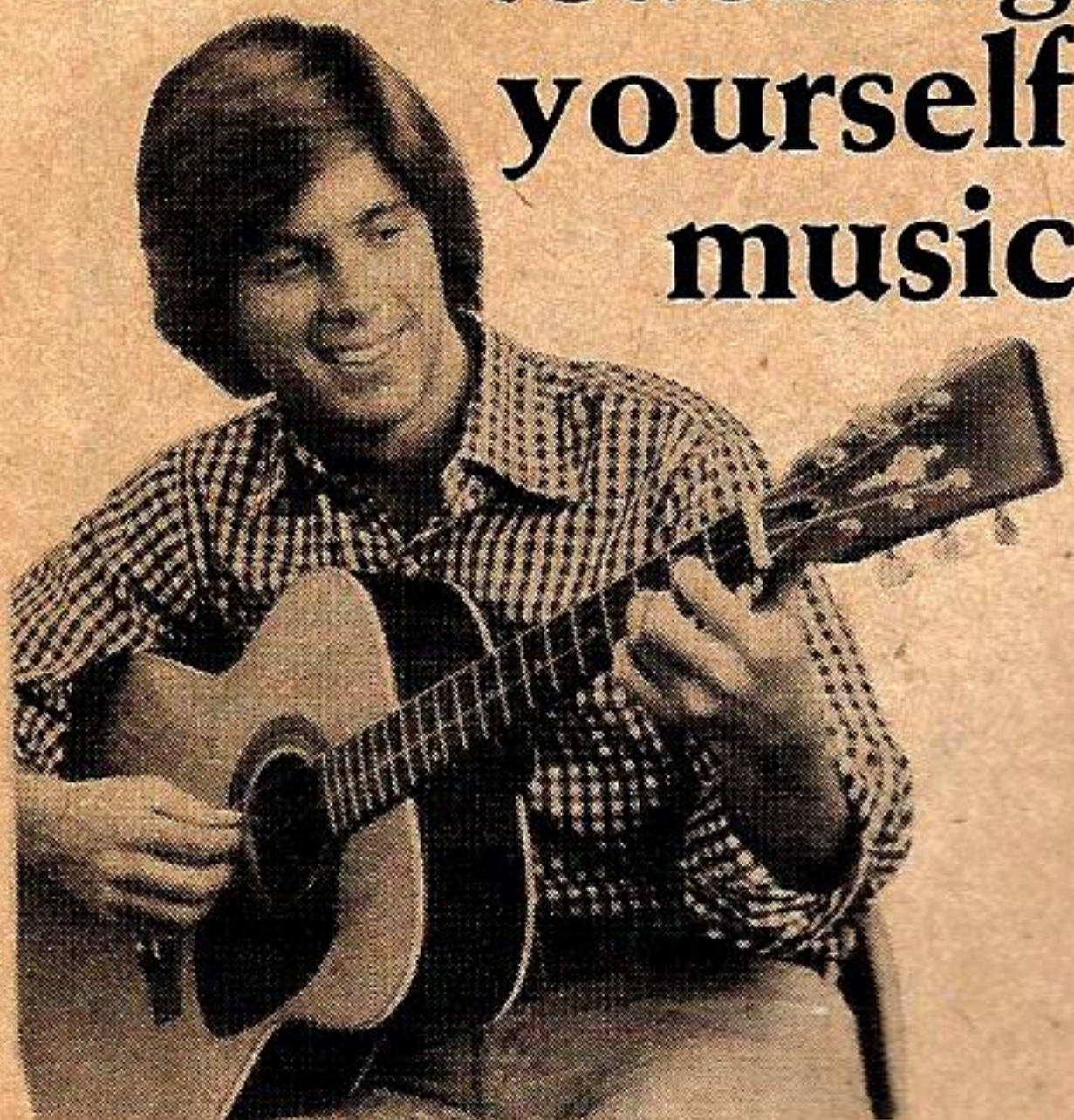
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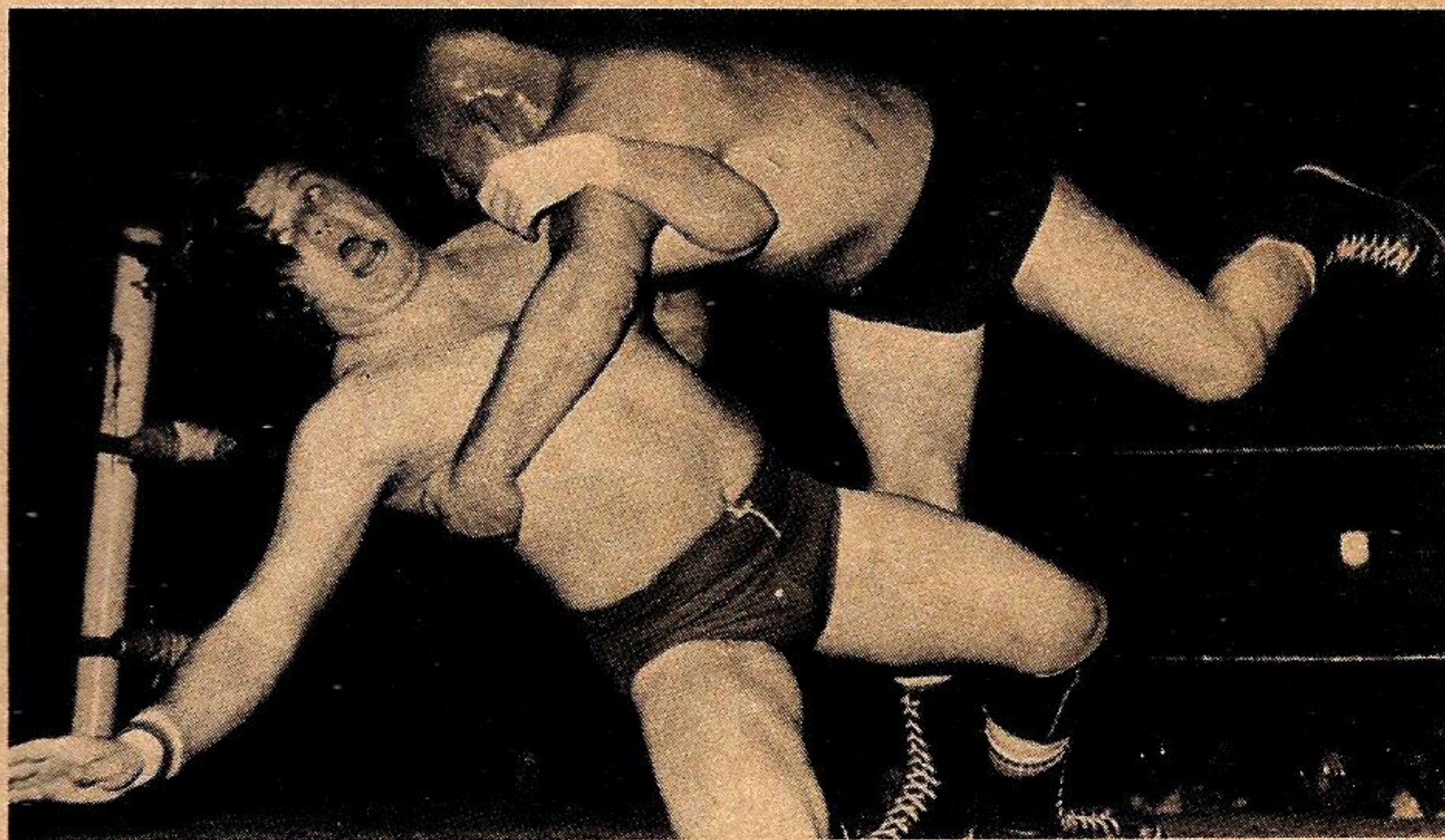
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ON THE ROAD

(Continued from Page 18)



Slater claims the press has always been hostile to him, even when he was wrestling scientifically, like he did against Brute Bernard (above).

"But you don't understand," he told me. "The treatment I have received has been even more virulent than what others have had. I mean, some people in the press like to dump on me, just because I beat Mr. Wrestling II or Paul Jones. Well, so what? That's my job. These goons are messing up the sport for the rest of us. If I beat them, it's because I've succeeded in my efforts. It means I am the better man. Now some people in the press corps are lightning-quick to point out that I used a great number of illegal maneuvers to achieve my goal. So what? That's what life is all about, isn't it?"

"And if I try to defend myself, matters only get worse. These self-appointed righteous reporters see fit to twist my words and make them mean what I don't intend them to mean. Well, I have had it with that kind of bull. I don't really give a damn about what I say to reporters because I know they'll only make me look as bad as they can anyway. Therefore, I do what I want to do when I wrestle. I win matches. That is what counts. Let these simps like Jones, Wrestling II, and the Grahams pander to the press. It doesn't bother me. Why should it? I know I've kept my

principles. Can they say the same thing?"

I think Dick misunderstands the whole problem. He seems to think he is the only one suffering because of this malady within the journalistic profession. He isn't. Yet his egomania (which is still very strong) will not let him see that other wrestlers have the same problem with certain reporters. Though I tried to explain this to him, he refused to comprehend what I was saying. I gave up trying.

As to whether or not the press has treated Dick Slater unfairly, I am not in a position to judge. There have been times when he has been accused to doing things no man could possibly do. I generally discount these reports. Indeed, I generally remain skeptical of anything I read. As a reporter, I know it is very hard for anyone to remain objective all the time. Personal likes and dislikes do account for a good deal of the biased reporting to which Slater referred.

It is a problem inherent in all of journalism. It is yet to be solved. Yet wouldn't it be nice if all wrestling reporters could retain an objective stance and just report the facts. □

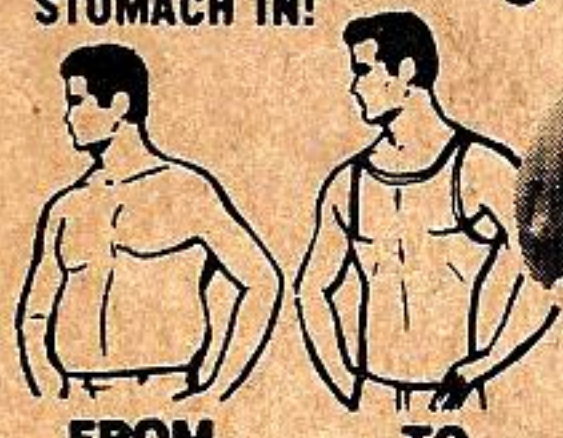
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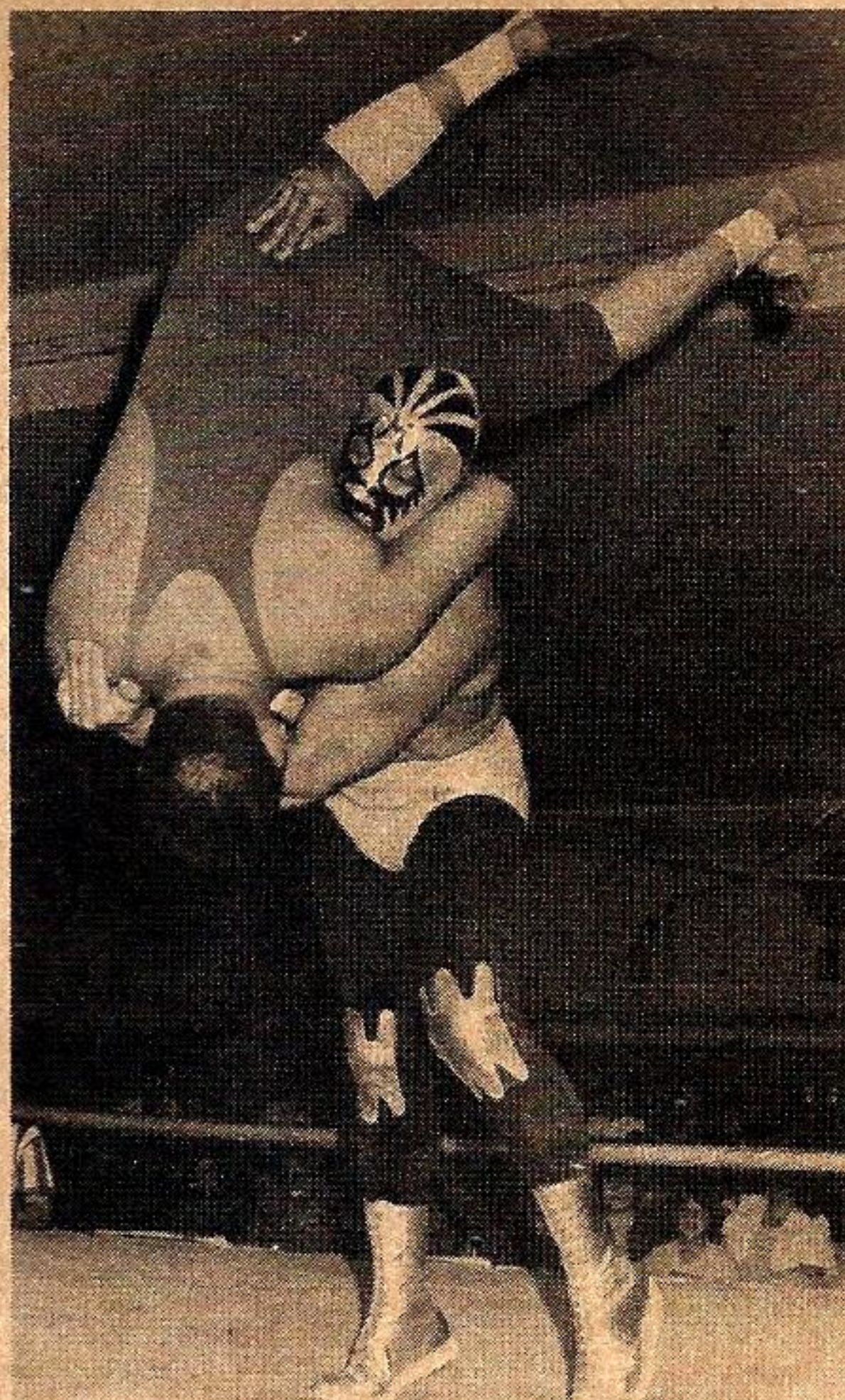
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MIL MASCARAS

(Continued from Page 38)



Mil's strength plays a great part in his experiments. He wants to see just how good he is without using the flying tactics he is noted for. Above and below: Mil demonstrates his tremendous strength on the evil Ota.



seems to crave the security which staying sure-footed on the canvas can provide. Is he suddenly afraid of that which made him famous?

Whenever we asked other wrestlers about what was happening to Mil, they always tried to ignore the question. They simply did not want to talk about it. Finally, we had to confront the masked wrestler directly. We had to know what caused the shocking change in Mil Mascaras.

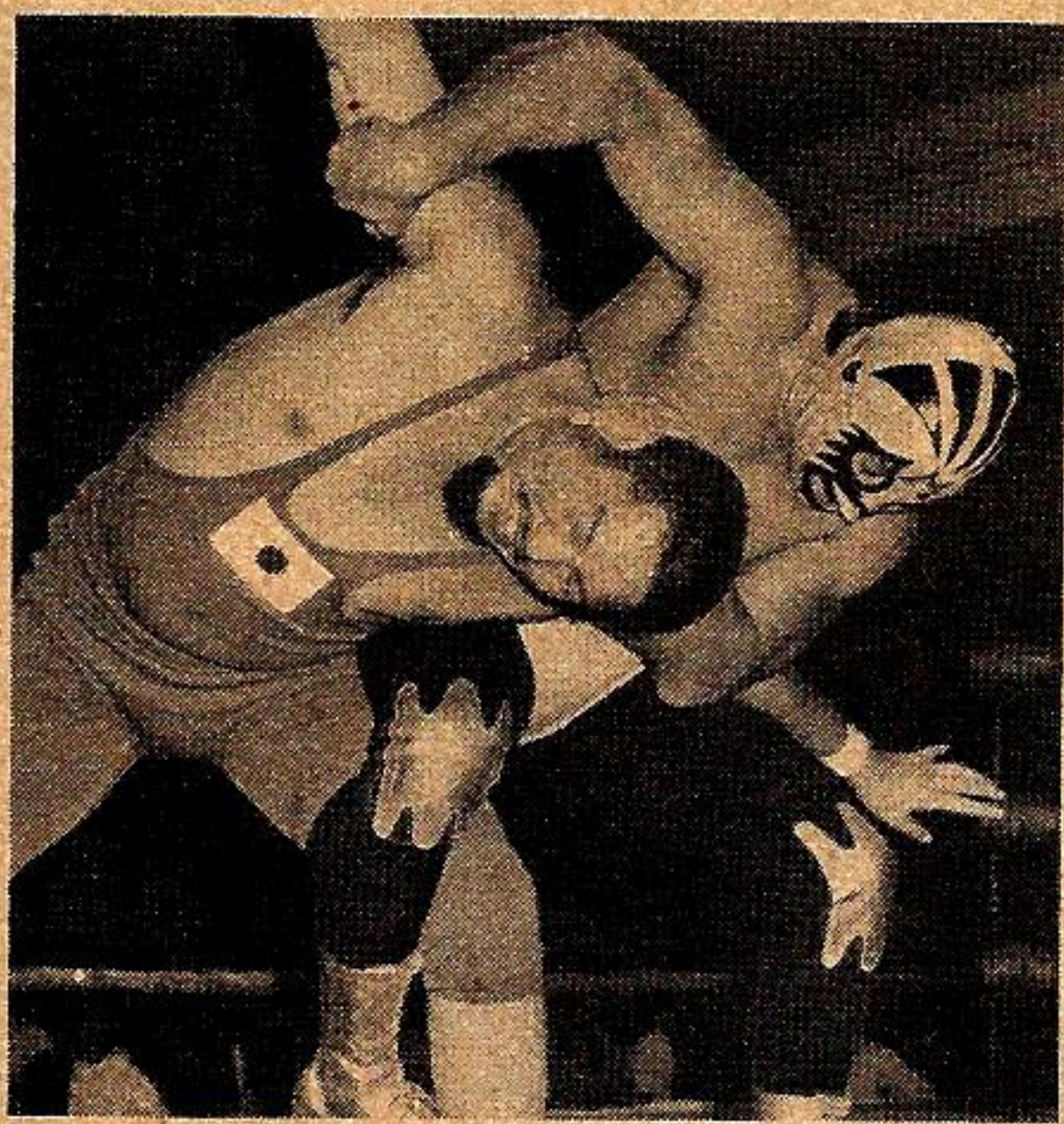
"The answer to your question is one word," Mil told us, "discipline. That is what this is all about."

We most certainly did not understand what he meant by that. We needed a clearer explanation.

"It is all very simple," Mil said, "this is a form of self-discipline for me. I am purposely avoiding the use of aerial tactics for a while. I am trying to develop other skills."

"Being reasonable, I have begun to think that I depend too much on flying maneuvers, at the expense of the complete use of other abilities. Granted, what I was doing before was sufficient for me to win matches. But sufficient is never enough for me. I wanted to do better, to be a more complete wrestler. In order to do this, I decided I had to make a change."

"Every wrestler is entitled to a chance for experimentation. This is mine. I am trying a whole new style, seeing if I can work well with it. For the most part, the experiment has been successful. Yet there are still areas in which I am deficient. I have much to learn, and I am trying to do that right now. If I am not as I usually am, please forgive me."



Instead of the flying bodypress, Mil ends things with an abdominal stretch. Mil proved he can function without having to use aerial moves throughout the match.

Just how well have these experiments been going? Opinions vary on that matter. Some people feel Mascaras should return to his usual style; that what he is doing now does not suit him well. They feel Mil has so perfected his aerial maneuvers that seeing him do otherwise (and not perfectly) is almost painful. They think Mil should rely on what he has perfected.

But others disagree strongly with this contention. They feel Mascaras has profited well by his experiment; that by broadening his horizons he has become a better wrestler, better able to cope with what opponents may try on him.

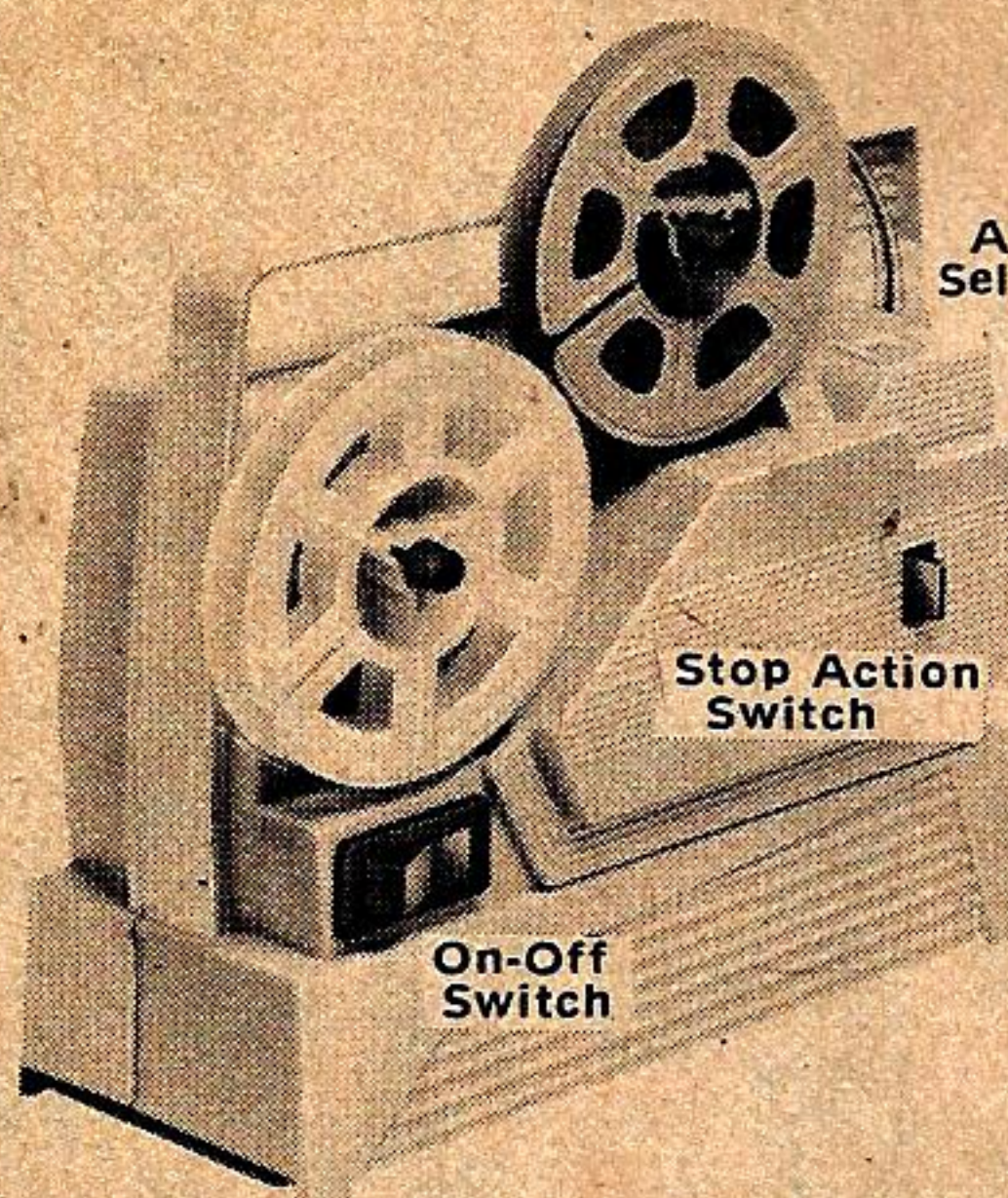
Mil's fans who have seen him in action are equally divided over whether they think this is good for Mascaras.

Of course, Mascaras thinks this is the best idea he has ever had. "I am a better wrestler now," he says. "I have learned so much by staying on the canvas it is amazing. I know I haven't done everything perfectly, but that's all right. I'm learning, and that is what is important. When this is all over. I will be a better wrestler."

There are those who argue that Mil already is a damn fine wrestler. Why should he tamper with success? ☐

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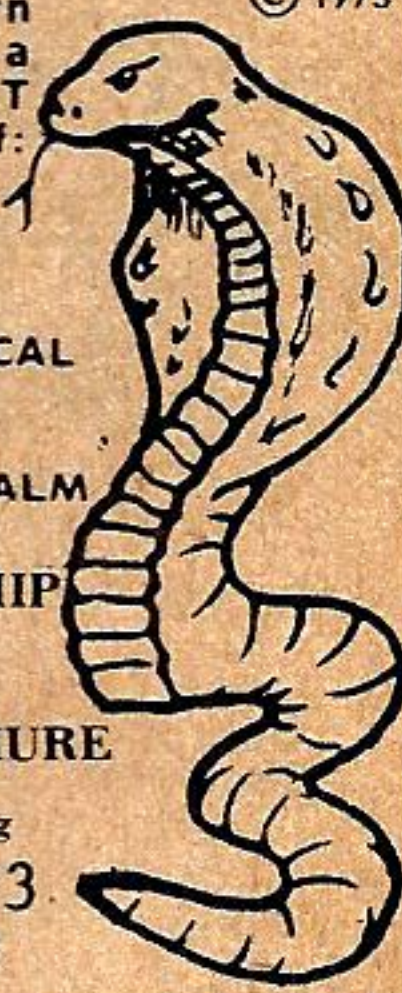
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THANK YOU FROM BOB BACKLUND

(Continued from Page 40)

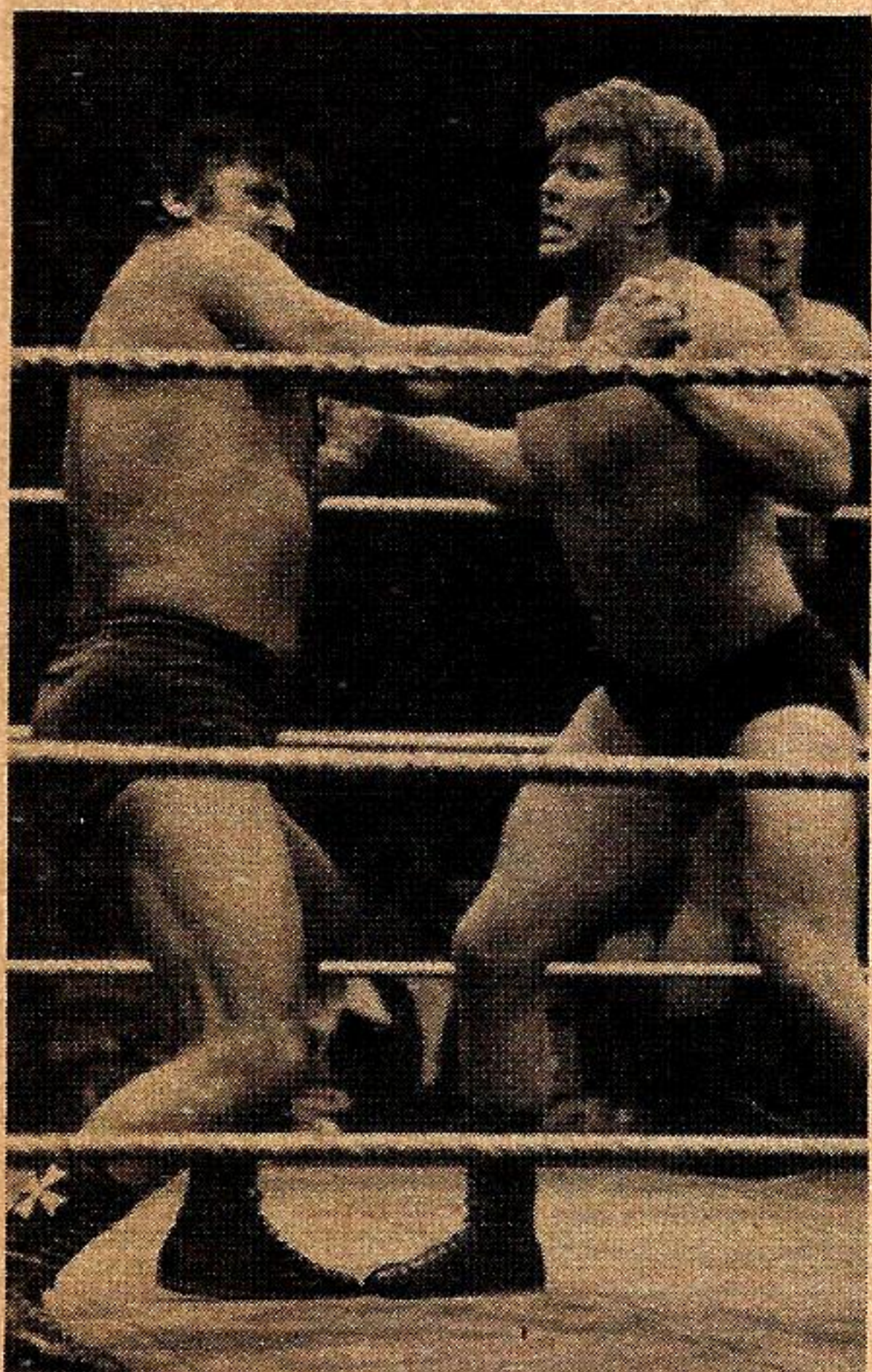


Above: Bob greets a fan when the young grappler went to New York for the first time. Below: Grand Wizard, Lou Albano, and Freddie Blassie aren't ashamed to pose together for photographers. These three were instrumental in forming the plot which almost destroyed Bob.



Other letters continue in this vein. Each makes a point of their happy surprise at receiving any acknowledgment of their letters, much less an elaborately designed postcard with a personal message. The fact that the greeting was handwritten impressed everyone.

"I could have had them printed," Bob explains, "and saved myself a lot of time. But I hate something that's stamped on a postcard. After all, if people were good enough to personally write something for me, the least I can do is the same for them. A



Backlund locks in a test of strength against the always dangerous Baron Scicluna during a tough bout.

couple of nights writing is nothing compared to how they saved my career."

A few people were outraged at the fans' letters and enraged by Backlund responses. These were the men whose conspiracy against Bob was thwarted by the fans. Once the fans have received Bob's note of thanks, they'll be his friends for life. This makes another conspiracy doomed to failure before it even starts.

"How can people like Backlund," mourns Lou Albano, "and be smart enough to write? I've never seen so much drivel on paper in my entire life! 'Let Bob wrestle. Bob is a great athlete.' How can people write like that? Where are their brains? We ought

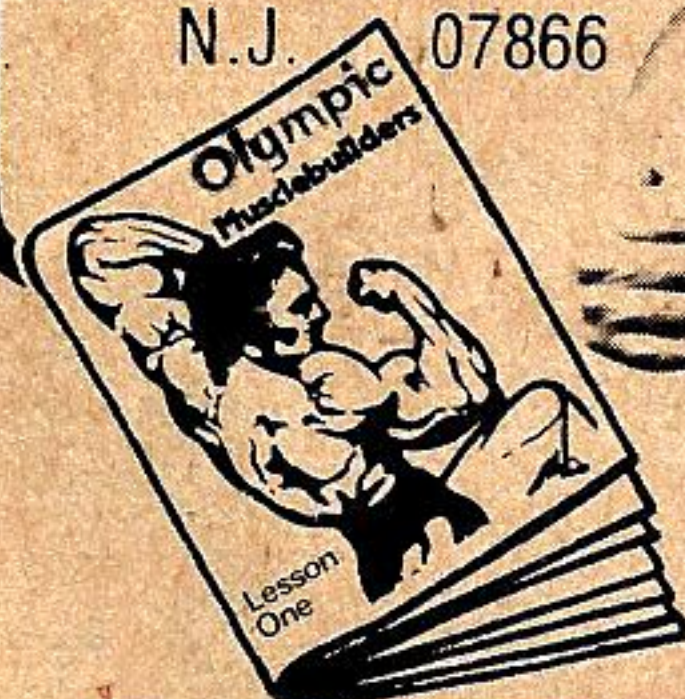
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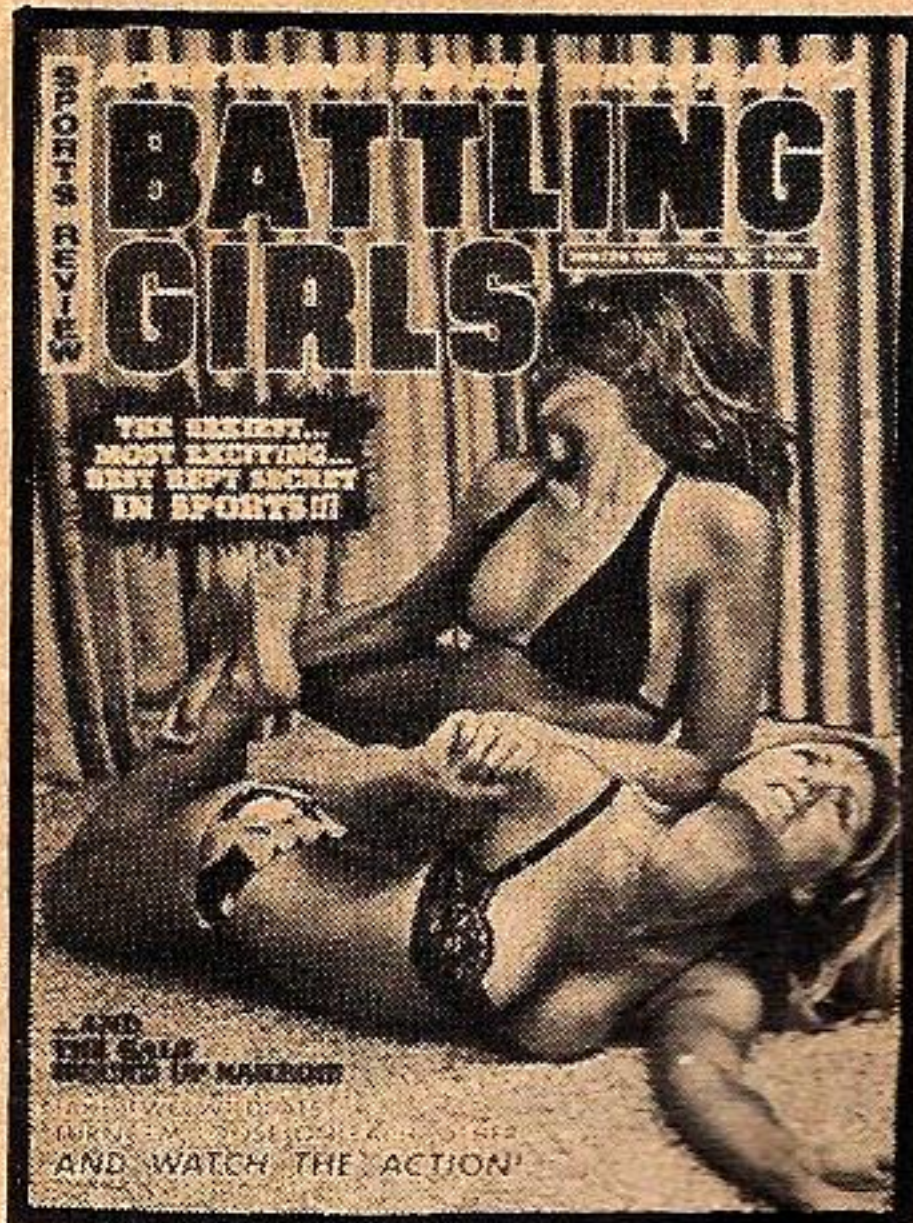
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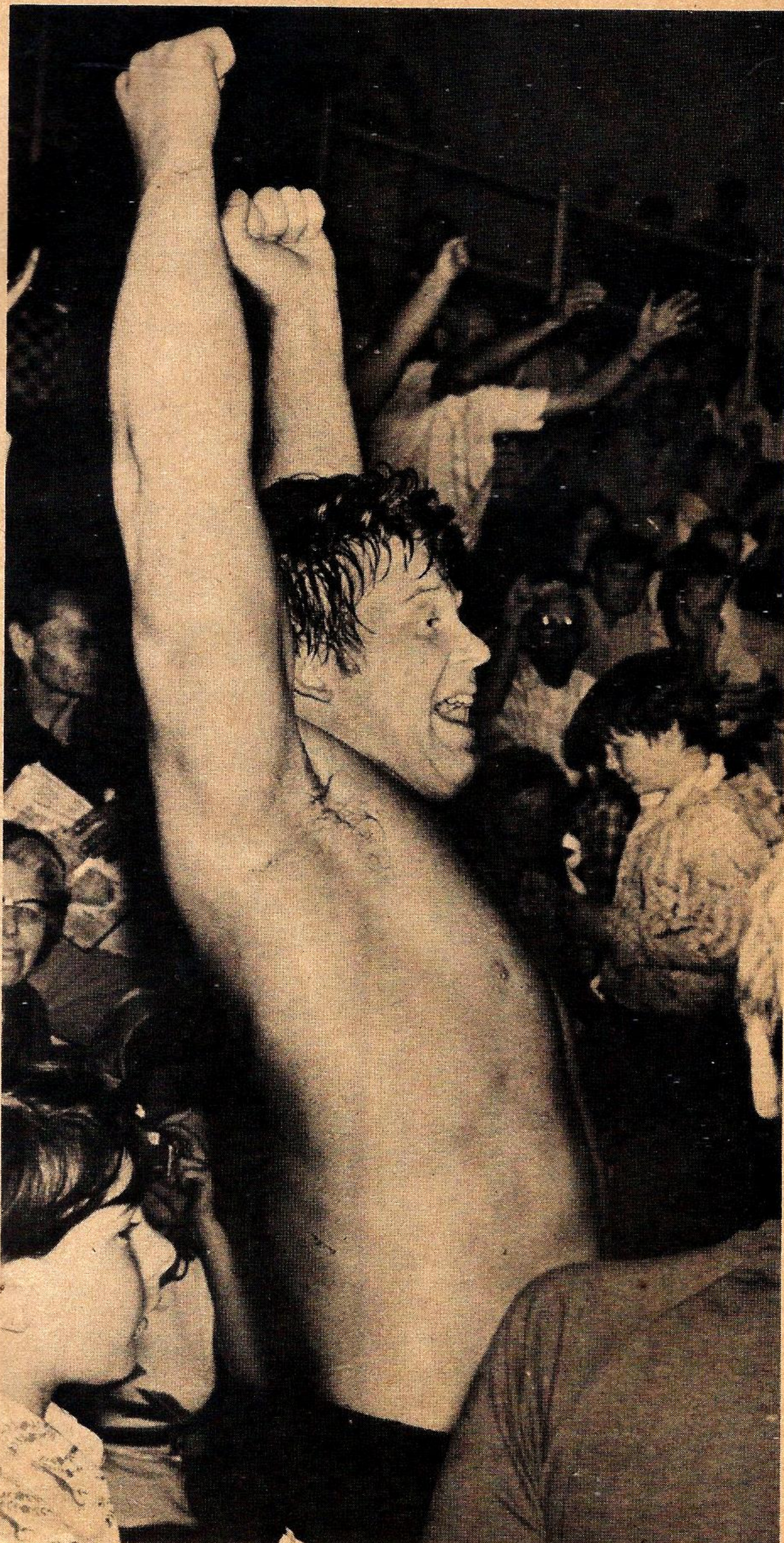
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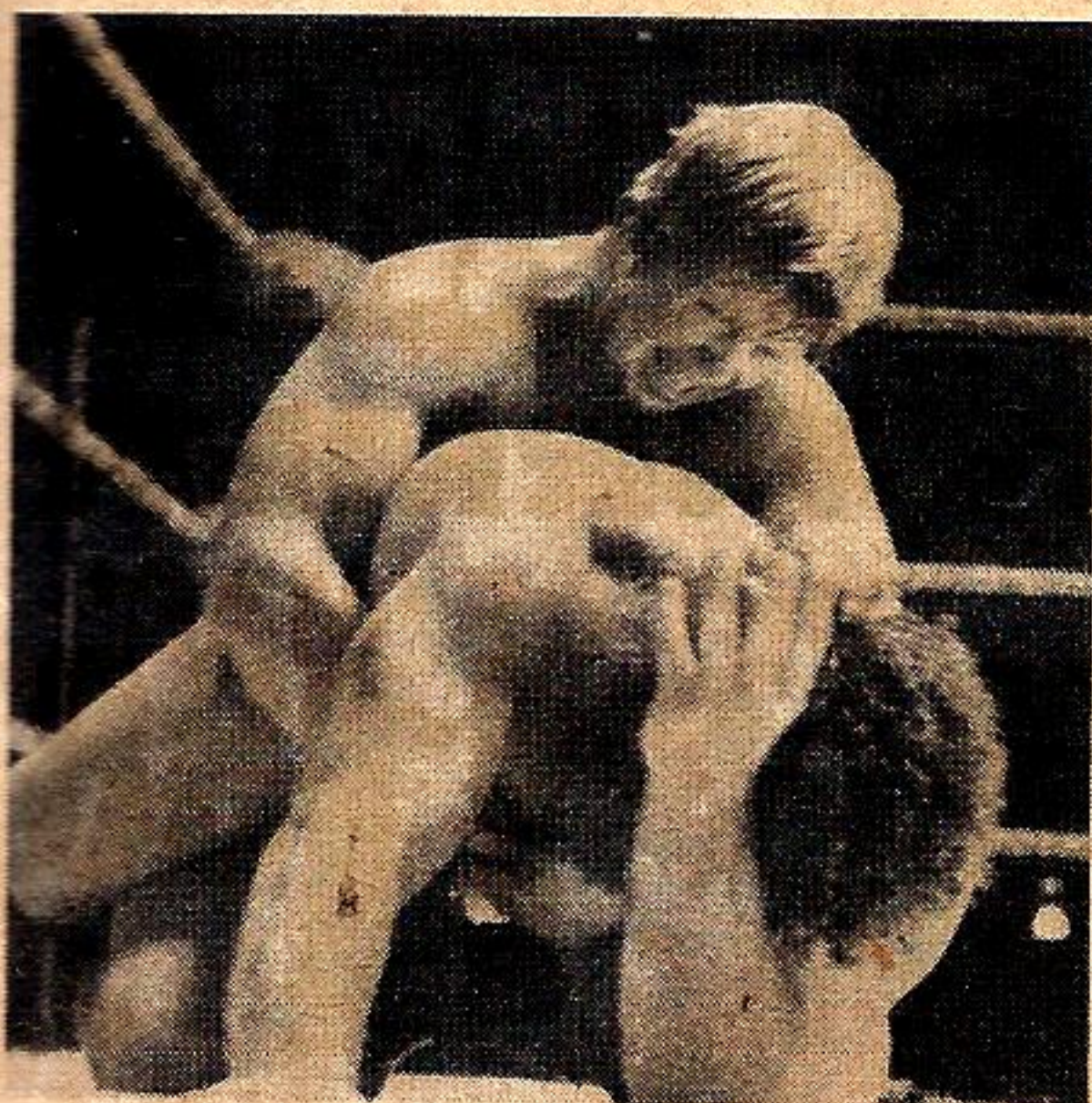
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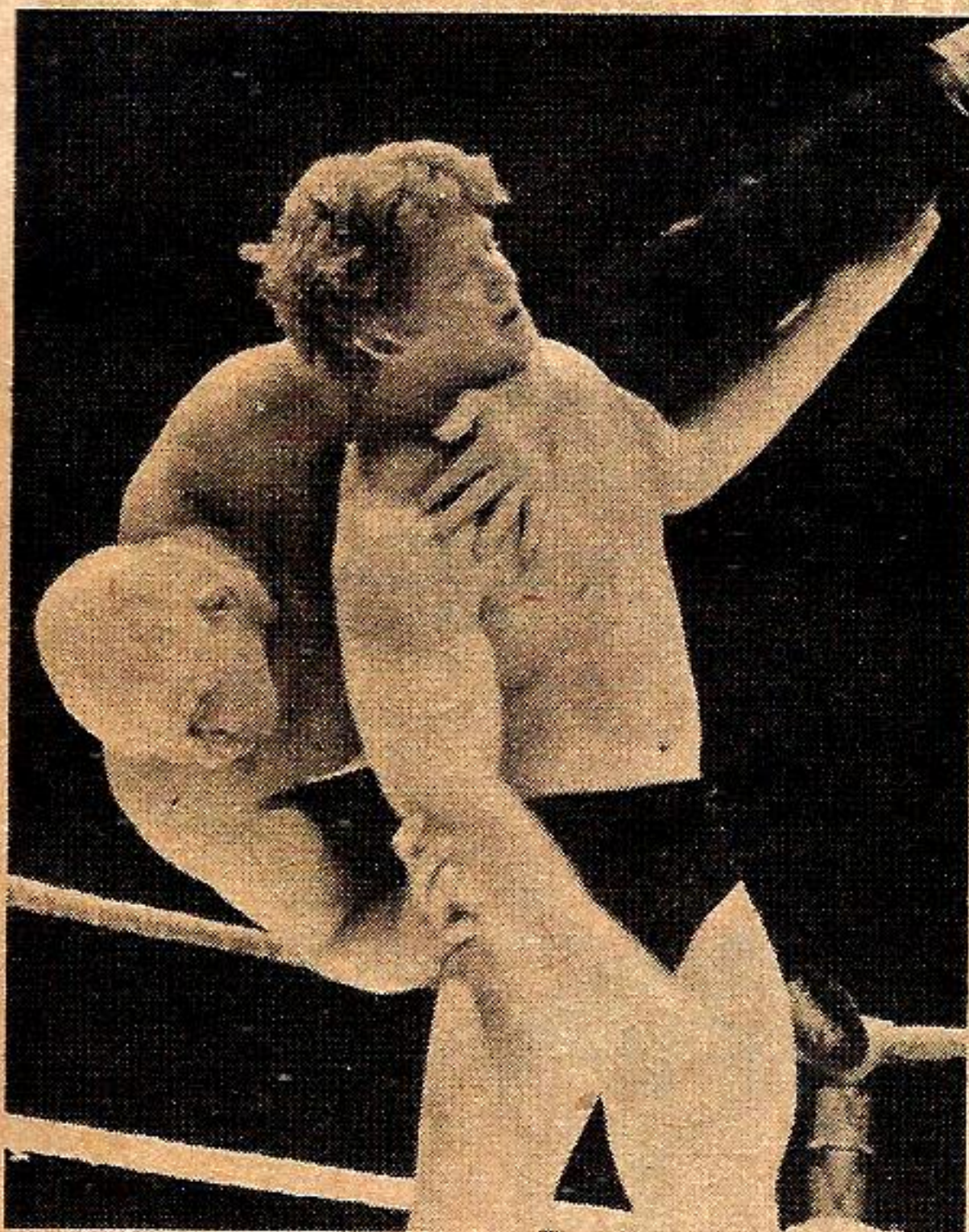
THANK YOU FROM BOB BACKLUND

(Continued from Page 63)





Above: Bob has Terry Funk caught and immobilized. Below: Backlund sends Baron Von Raschke flying.



to get a list of all the scribblers and hand it over to the mental health authorities.

"But most insulting of all is that they accuse me, and other great managers, of trying to blackball Backlund. That guy is beneath my contempt. He's too inconsequential to worry about. Why, he'd be flattered if I paid him any attention at all.

"Now the commissioners have read those letters and don't trust me. Isn't that incredible! It's an absolute scandal, a disgrace. The name of Lou Albano is trusted all over the world. Now my reputation for honesty has been besmirched. People will pay for this. People will pay!"

Albano is going to have plenty of chances to get back at Backlund. The young man will be coming to the WWF on a regular basis. It means Albano and his conspirators have failed. The fans can be thanked for that. And the fans thank Bob Backlund. ☐

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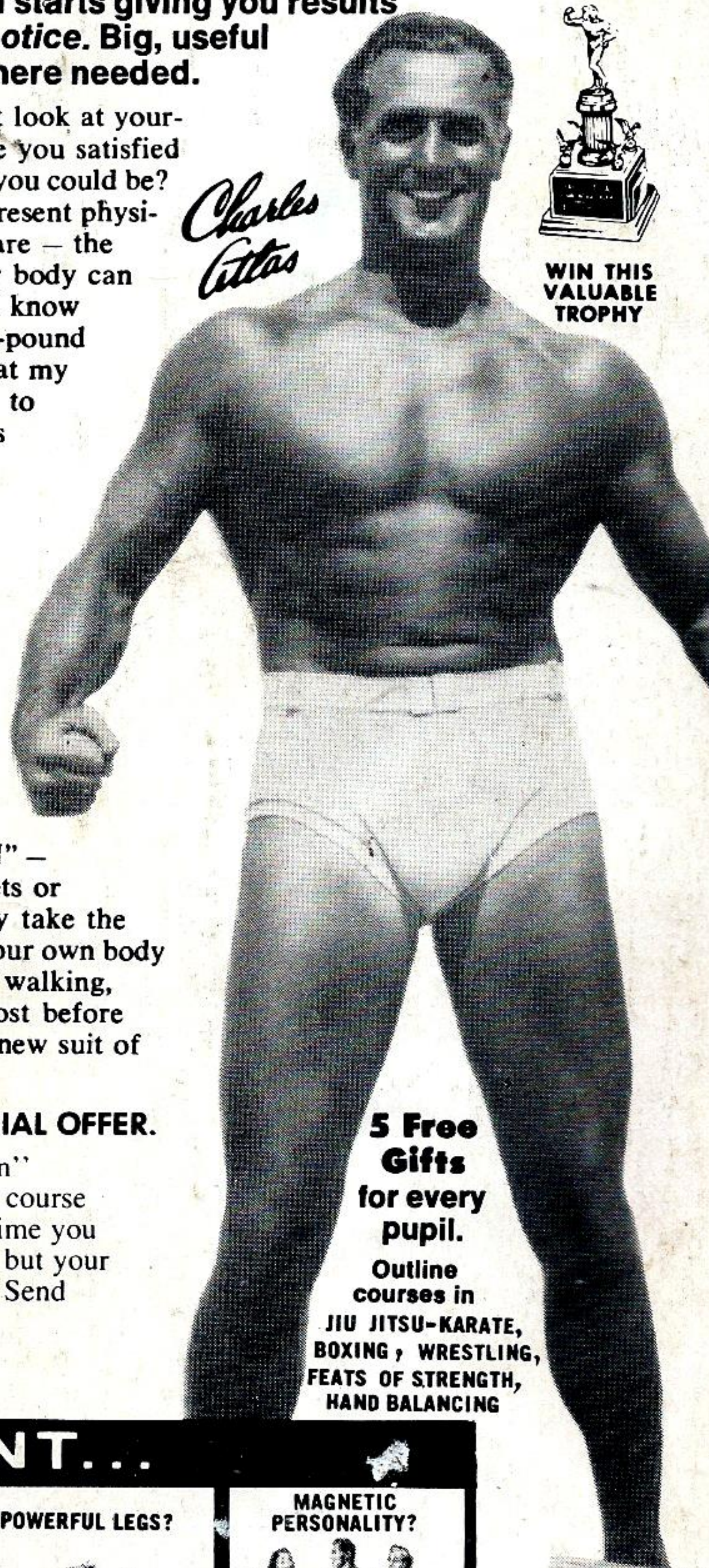
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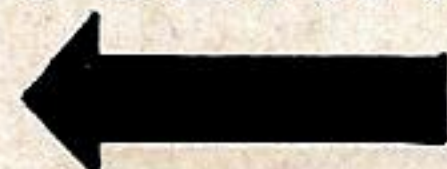
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